

WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR



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FREE

# Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk October 4, 2015

North & West edition No 680

## NEWS

### Train drivers' migrant fears

French union calls for action over tunnel deaths

## TRANSPORT

### Welcome to pothole season

Those horrible holes in our roads are back

## HEALTH

### Time to cut the fags and booze?

Are you taking part in Stoptober or Go Sober for October?

## NEWS

# Not opening very soon

Launch of London Paramount Resort Park delayed by a year



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## Comparing the past with our present surroundings and thinking about our potential future county landscapes

AFTER living somewhere for a while, it is easy to get used to your surroundings and pay little thought to the way that the area used to be.

However, look back just a few years and you may see that enormous changes have been made in the places that you frequently visit or call home.

In this week's paper, we take a look at the adaptations that have been made to the county since Google's Street View first launched seven years ago – with a number of contrasting images painting the picture of a frequently changing landscape.

These include the Tunbridge Wells cinema, which has been closed for eight years and was recently pulled down, and the Turner Contemporary art gallery, which was built along the sea wall in Margate.

In another seven years, a huge number of additional changes could

also have been made in the county – with developments being proposed on a regular basis and developers with their eye on the area keen to make adaptations.

The fact that the county has evolved so much in just seven years shows how quickly things can change.

For example, just a few decades ago it was very rare for anyone to have a mobile phone or regular access to the internet.

Now, there are many people who find it difficult to imagine how they would be able to get by without those two things.

While it is good to embrace change, it can also be interesting to take a look back and see how things used to be, and how people lived their lives previously – which can unearth some fascinating stories.

Have a good weekend and we hope you enjoy the paper.

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## Dartford MP spearheads talks over traffic trouble

**Jamie Weir**

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DARTFORD'S MP Gareth Johnson has sparked controversy saying traffic trouble on the Thames crossing won't be solved until a new bridge is built east of Gravesend.

The MP made the comments following a crisis meeting convened On Thursday to tackle growing congestion at the Dartford Crossing.

But Mr Johnson's belief that a new crossing should be built east of Gravesend could cause upset to fellow Conservative MP for Gravesham Adam Holloway.

Mr Holloway has been a vocal critic of proposals for a new Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend since it was first put forward, citing the damage it could cause.

Mr Holloway told KoS: "I think perhaps we should be waiting to see what the full effect of the removal of the tolls will be, along with what the impact of bringing freight further up the country in other ways could have, before any progress is made on another crossing.



**CONTROVERSY:** The location of a new crossing is likely to be a hot topic in the future

"We also need to realise that a new crossing east of Gravesend would cost around £5 billion as well as blighting an area."

But Mr Johnson feels that resilience is the key, stating that the best way to do that is build east of Gravesend.

He said: "The M25 will always present difficult challenges and there will always be occasions where road accidents occur.

"These problems will not be com-

pletely resolved until another bridge is built which, in my opinion, needs to be located east of Gravesend."

The meeting which Mr Johnson held aimed to provide a joint approach from different organisations to combat traffic trouble, with representatives from Highways England, the Department for Transport, Kent Police, Kent County Council and Dartford Borough Council joining him.

He said progress had been made, but more still needed to be done.

Mr Johnson said: "This is the first time we have ever got people round the table together as part of the ongoing process to improve traffic problems.

"No one is claiming there is a magic wand to solve the traffic problems at the Dartford Crossing but getting all parties responsible for running the crossing working together is important."

## 30 miles of new coastal paths from Folkestone to Camber announced

GETTING out to view the county's coastline is being made easier for Kent's keen hikers, after environment minister Elizabeth Truss announced that 30 miles of new coastal footpaths will be opened to walkers.

The paths will sweep around the southern coast, stretching from Camber in East Sussex all the way to Folkestone. It'll take in the views off St Mary's Bay in Romney, and also include the Dungeness Peninsula.

Work will now take place to build the new paths, with Kent County Council partnering with Natural England – the government's nature agency – to construct the route.

The aim of the new route is to attract more tourists to explore the coastline of Kent, helping to grow the tourism economy in the area and benefitting restaurants, hotels and pubs on the path's route.

More than 16 million tourists visited the South East of England last year, contributing £2.4 billion to the

regional economy, which the government hopes will increase further in the coming years following the opening of these footpaths.

Rory Stewart, parliamentary under-secretary at the department for environment, food and rural affairs, said: "Kent boasts some breath-taking, picture-postcard scenery.

"We hope its beautiful beaches, once opened up to intrepid explorers through these trails, will further boost the number of tourists already flocking to enjoy this historic coastline.

"Alongside the economic benefits the paths will also allow more people to simply enjoy our stunning natural landscape – something that's crucial for our health and well-being."

The new path is the latest to be unveiled by government as part of plans by Natural England to open up access to around 2,700 miles of trail around the English coast.

## Consultation begins on how to apply for school places

PARENTS are being urged to have their say on the school admissions process in Medway with a consultation which launched this week.

Medway Council wants views on the proposed arrangements for the start of the 2017 academic year in a bid to improve the process for applying for places.

A spokesman explained: "We

are committed to providing clear guidance to parents to allow them to make the best decisions for their children and, to assist, a guide to secondary admissions will be available in June 2016 and a primary version by the middle of September 2016."

The consultation, co-ordinated by the council, ends at 5pm on Friday, November 13.

## Bridge works to cause delay on stretches of A20 and M25

MOTORISTS are being warned to expect disruption on the A20 and M25 later this month, as work begins on bridge repairs.

The closure will be on the westbound A20 between the M20 junction 1 and M25 junction 3 and the B2173 near Swanley.

Work on will take place from each night, excluding Saturdays, from Monday until October 13.

The second closure will be on the anti-clockwise M25 between junction 5 and junction 4 near Shoreham. Work will take place each night, except Saturday, between October 21 and 28.

The final closure will be on the clockwise M25 between junction 4 for Leybourne and junction 5 for Aylesford. Work will take place overnight from November 2-9.





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## Be alert to flood of fake £20 notes in county

POLICE have this week issued a warning over a number of fake £20 notes which have been found in circulation across the east of the county.

The counterfeit notes, which appear to be Scottish, have been found in circulation in Canterbury, Folkestone, Dover and Deal. Police say that they can be spotted due to their poor paper quality and an unclear

watermark. They are advising anyone who thinks they have a fake note to check using a link at the Bank of England website.

Any counterfeit notes which are found should be taken to the police station. Police say that shopkeepers should phone 101 if someone attempts to pay them with a fake note.

## Eurotunnel supports fearful train drivers as migrant crisis worsens

**Tom Pyman**

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EUROTUNNEL has issued its support for French train drivers who have said they are too afraid to do their job after the latest death of a migrant trying to cross to Britain.

The drivers with France's largest labour union, the CGT, published an open letter calling for action following the deaths of at least 13 migrants in five months as they tried to access the tunnel.

The letter spoke of their gut-wrenching fear 'when entering the tunnel, where an Eritrean in his twenties was found dead after being hit by a freight train on Wednesday morning.

John Keefe, a spokesman for Eurotunnel, said: "We have a great deal of sympathy for their position.

"We have had a good working relationship with our staff and understand how they feel and want an end to this migrant crisis.

"That's why we are investing so



**SUPPORT:** Eurotunnel

much so that people don't place themselves in danger.

"We have a lot of investment in hard infrastructure such as fences and cameras but also softer infrastructure like psychological support.

We're trying to support them as much as we can.

"The English staff drive the same course so have to experience the same thing as the French drivers. The letter is a very articulate explanation of what they're feeling and trying to get across."

The death of the Eritrean was the second migrant fatality within 24 hours after a 20-year-old Iraqi was found crushed to death in the back of a lorry - thought to have been caused when the cargo in the lorry shifted during transit.

Eurotunnel's passenger service reported delays of up to an hour between the UK and France on Friday, but Mr Keefe confirmed there were no further casualties.

"There was nothing in the tunnel," he said. "This was just residue of migrant activity overnight, particularly in the early morning, with people getting onto the track and disrupting the service."

As many as 4,000 migrants are camped in Calais near the Channel Tunnel entrance.



**WORK:** Jo James received the award

## Business chief gets women of year accolade

KENT Invicta Chamber of Commerce chief executive Jo James will join other leading women from around the country at the Women of the Year awards lunch.

This year Mrs James has been recognised as one of the 2015 Women of Achievement for the role she has played in buoying Kent's business community while at the chamber of commerce.

She first joined the chamber in 1990, and has since become a familiar face to those within the business community, building the chamber to become the county's leading business support organisation.

Alongside her duties at the chamber, Mrs James has also been directly involved as a board member on the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership, helping to make key decisions on how to support business growth across the region.

Mrs James said: "I feel very honoured to be recognised as a Women of the Year.

"I am in the fortunate position of being able to do a job that I enjoy immensely, working alongside a fantastic team of people in a very vibrant and entrepreneurial business community in Kent and Medway."

## Memorial to Gurkhas unveiled by TV star

TV STAR and veteran Gurkha campaigner Joanna Lumley will be in Folkestone today (Sunday) to unveil a new statue which honours the second battalion of the Royal Gurkha Rifles.

The star will unveil the statue of a Gurkha in full combat dress at the Folkestone Garden of Remembrance, Sandgate Road at 2pm. A number of dignitaries will be attending, including the first lady of Nepal as well as the country's foreign minister and acting ambassador.

The statue has been commissioned by the Gurkha Memorial Fund, which is a charity set up to raise funds for the project.

This year marks the Gurkha's 200th anniversary year, which the charity says makes the memorial a fitting tribute.

It will also honour the contribution the Gurkha community has made the Folkestone since it became the battalion's home - something which is particularly important since there is currently no tribute to them in the town.

## £2.65m high street works keep on track

WORK on the transformation on Tonbridge High Street continues apace - but businesses are keen to stress they are still open for business despite some of the disruption.

Progress on the £2.65m regeneration scheme got under way in August - now, six weeks in, and the team behind the project say all is going to plan.

Matthew Balfour, Kent County Council's cabinet member for environment and transport, said: "We are pleased the work is fully under way and local people are able to see changes being made that will make the whole area more welcoming and pedestrian friendly, with less congestion and improved air quality."

Teresa Seamer, shop owner and member of the Tonbridge Town Team, said: "We are excited that the regeneration of Tonbridge High Street is now up and running, however it is important to remember that the town centre is not closed for business - there are still all the usual fantastic shops offering quality goods and services throughout the duration of the works."

## Train station move sees car park closed

MEDWAY Council has confirmed a major car park in Rochester is to close to enable the completion of a £25m railway station move.

Rochester station is being shifted along the line, with work nearing completion, allowing for longer trains to service the town.

The car park will close on Monday for up to eight weeks, to allow Medway Council to raise the car park level, resurface, install new lighting and landscaping, and Network Rail to finish the forecourt and the embankment alongside the car park.

The new station is part of Network Rail's east Kent signalling programme to improve the reliability of rail services, increase capacity and improve journey times.

A multi-storey car park with 325 spaces for station users is currently being built on Rochester Riverside and will be connected to the station via a new subway. Works will be completed in early 2016.

While the car park is closed, drivers are advised to use alternative car parks at Gas House Road, Rochester and the Civic Centre in Strood.



# London Paramount confirms opening delayed until 2021

By Chris Britcher

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THE £2billion London Paramount Resort has delayed its opening by a year to enable it to have extra time to resolve transport and environmental issues.

The ambitious scheme is set to transform a former concrete factory site on the Swanscombe peninsula into a major entertainment complex, featuring a huge theme park – using branding of Hollywood movies created by the Paramount studios – as well as live music venues and other commercial and industrial opportunities.

It is set to create 27,000 jobs and be similar in scale to Disneyland Paris.

Originally planned to open in the summer of 2019, it was then put back to Easter 2020. But this week it confirmed it will now not be welcoming the 15 million-a-year visitors until 2021.

David Testa, chief executive officer of London Paramount, said: "We have and will continue to carry out further environmental and transport studies... ensuring we get both the business and masterplan right while giving consideration to matters raised during the consultation process."

"In light of our ongoing studies and detailed discussions with the planning inspec-



**ANTICIPATED:** The park is expecting to attract 15 million visitors every year

torate and local authorities, we have decided to give ourselves a bit more time to do this and to revise our submission date for the development consent order (DCO)."

As a 'nationally significant infrastructure project' the scheme will be ruled on by the government rather than the local Dartford or Gravesham councils.

As a consequence, it needs to secure a DCO to allow it to be given the green light.

Adds Mr Testa: "It is critical the application for London Paramount is comprehensive

when we present it to the planning inspectorate and so we have decided to submit the application in mid-2016. This will see the entertainment resort open in 2021."

A key concern is the transport infrastructure – including a dedicated access road from the A2 to separate all visitor and local traffic. Park bosses want to ensure this aspect is fully complete in time for the park's opening and are currently considering a range of possible scenarios as well as environmental studies.

## Final farewell this week to Gills stalwart

THE funeral of a long-standing executive at Gillingham Football Club takes place this Friday.

Nick Nicolaou served for 15 years at Priestfield as the club's sales manager and was appointed to the role shortly after chairman Paul Scally joined.

The father-of-two and grandfather-of-one passed away recently after a fight against cancer. He was 56.

The funeral service is in Bobbing at 4pm.

## Call the Midwife crew shoots at dockyard

TV crews have been back at the Historic Dockyard in Chatham shooting scenes for the upcoming series of BBC1's popular Call the Midwife.

The show is certainly no stranger to the site, which has hosted scenes through all four previous series, as the dockyard is turned into a 1950s street scene.

## Homeless house bid

A SCHEME to help homeless families and save money will be discussed by Swale Borough Council next week.

The plans would see the authority buy a property to be turned into temporary accommodation which would avoid seeing families moved outside the borough. A similar scheme last year saved the council £28,000 over B&B costs.

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# Former punk rocker turned jihadist hit by UN sanctions

FOUR UK jihadists believed to be fighting for so-called Islamic State in Syria – including a mother-of-two from Chatham – are to experience tough UN sanctions.

Sally Anne-Jones, 46, who used to be in a punk rock band, is in Syria along with her 11-year-old son.

She is believed to be among many hundred British citizens who have travelled to the Middle East to support or fight for groups such as IS.

In the past, she has tweeted inflammatory comments and is believed to be responsible for recruiting for the group.

Now an updated list of those experiencing sanctions includes her along with with Nasser Muthana from Cardiff, Omar Hussain from High Wycombe and Aqsa Mahmood from Glasgow.



As a consequence of the sanctions – requested by the UK government – they will now face a travel ban and see their assets frozen.

The sanctions are designed to tackle the rise in extremist

terrorism. It is hoped such moves will deter others from making the dangerous journey to join IS.

It is the first time since 2006 that the UK has requested names be added to the list.

## Hospital staff face abuse after RAF officer move row

STAFF at the QEOM Hospital in Margate say they have received abusive phone calls this week, after revelations a member of staff asked a uniformed RAF sergeant if he wanted to move away from other patients amid claims it may upset others.

Sergeant Mark Prendeville, who has served in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Iraq, was taken to the hospital in Margate after an accident during a training exercise at Manston when chemicals from a fire extinguisher got into the 38-year-old aircraft engineer's eyes.

His father Jim Prendeville said "to say I was incensed would put it mildly". He added: "My son was more upset by the way he was treated than he was about the burns in his eyes."

A spokesman for East Kent

University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust said: "The member of staff who offered the sergeant an opportunity to move into the main A&E department rather than remain in the waiting room was acting in good faith and was simply trying to be kind and helpful to the patient."

"A few days earlier she had witnessed an incident in which some unruly members of the public had abused a member of the military and she was keen to ensure the RAF sergeant was not subjected to similar abuse."

"As a result of this story, our staff have been subject to a number of abusive and threatening calls, comments and messages. We are seeking advice from the police in relation to some of these calls."

## Theatre wins top award

THE MARLOWE Theatre in Canterbury, has won the award of 'most welcoming theatre in the south east' by the sector's leading body, UK Theatre.

It now means it goes on the shortlist to win the national award which will be announced on October 18.

## Attend health meeting

THE NHS Canterbury and Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is inviting people to its governing body meeting on October 7.

The meeting will take place from 2pm to 5.30pm at the Seasalter Christian Centre, 49 Faversham Road, CT5 4AX.

## Probe after school fire

POLICE are appealing for information after a major fire at a former school house in Brewer Street, Maidstone, caused thousands of pounds worth of damage.

The blaze is believed to have been started deliberately. Witnesses should call 01622 604100.

## Memorial for Allan Willett

A SPECIAL memorial service took place on Friday for Allan Willett, the former Lord Lieutenant of Kent who died earlier this summer.

The successful businessman and county figure was recognised with the service at Canterbury Cathedral.

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## Top Three Stories



### 1. Eagle goes on the run

A massive eagle went AWOL from a show

### 2. Care home consultation

KCC looks to save costs by shutting homes

### 3. Another migrant dies

The death toll rises in the Channel Tunnel

## The Essential Guide:



### Richborough Connection

Why the pylons are needed and where they'll go



**FEATURED PHOTO GALLERY:** It's curtain up at the Assembly Hall Theatre in Tunbridge Wells which has now reopened to the public after a £1.5 million transformation

## Missed last week'...

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## Top Three Blogs



### 1. Grumpy Jihadi in Syria

It's not easy fighting for Isis

### 2. Time to be productive

Sometimes less really can be more

### 3. Trashy TV brings joy

It's comforting to know what will happen

## Results of the KoS Online Poll

### Should smoking in cars with children be illegal?

- 1 Yes - it's disgusting 39%
- 2 No - it's a waste of police time 26%
- 3 Maybe - but it'll never be enforced 15%
- 4 Undecided - 20%



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**FURY:** Campaigners complain that countryside is under threat while no plan is in place but Fran Wilson (inset) says it's not the council's fault things have been delayed

# Campaigners angry over how long Maidstone's local plan is taking

Council leader Fran Wilson has blamed the length of time the strategic development document has taken on changes which Maidstone was forced to take into account midway through the process...

**Jamie Weir**  
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

**C**OUNTRYSIDE campaign group CPRE Kent has slammed the length of time it has taken Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to push through its local plan as a fresh consultation was opened on Friday.

The document, which will guide development across the borough until 2031, has been years in the making.

But the council's leader, Fran Wilson, has insisted that it isn't MBC's fault, instead saying that the government moved the goalposts.

The Liberal Democrat said that although the plan had progressed significantly before now, national data from central government had meant the council was forced to revise it, delaying its progress.

Cllr Wilson said: "We had a delay, but it wasn't our fault. Over the last two years, we've had new figures about housing need as we go forward, and we've had to make sure the plan responds to that. The information has changed, and obviously its taken time for us to reflect that."

CPRE Kent – the county's branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England – thinks it has taken too long, and even now fails to reflect the concerns of local people in the borough.

Chairman of its Maidstone committee, Gary Thomas, says that the planning department at the council is 'barmy' and has failed local residents.

He said: "It's difficult to actually communicate just how poor Maidstone's planning department are right now, and just how out of touch they are with what people want here."

"The plan has been appallingly slow to come out as well, which has exposed the borough to applications for development which no-one apart from the developers want."

"The speed which the council has been working has left Maidstone open to potentially damaging development as housebuilders are able to frontrun the actual plan. We've already seen that with a couple of schemes which have been given the green light when they wouldn't have been likely to get permission if a plan were in place."

It's a criticism which the council's leader rejects, telling KoS that although the plan has taken time, it's important to get it right.

**“The whole thing is just completely barmy. It's difficult to actually communicate just how poor Maidstone's planning department are right now...”**

**Gary Thomas,**  
Chairman of CPRE Maidstone

Cllr Wilson said: "Yes of course we are having developers putting in applications and without a local plan in place it has been more difficult to defend against development."

"However, we do still have a local plan, even if its value is diminishing with time, and we've saved certain policies. Those have helped us say no to some developments which have been put forward while we're working on the current plan."

The plan has been mired in controversy since it first emerged, with what some believe is an excessive housing target, and too many greenfield – or undeveloped – sites be-

ing targeted in open countryside.

The current consultation for the plan is aiming for an 18,560 additional homes between 2011 and the plan's end in 2031. The council says that of that number 2,341 have already been built, while a further 5,508 are in the pipeline.

Mr Thomas says that he's convinced that it has been poorly thought out and executed since the beginning.

He told KoS: "The housing numbers are far in excess of what Maidstone needs, and what we want also, with planners that have come up with these figures that bear little relation to what people here would like."

Lenham has been one area within the borough which has already seen development given the nod by the council according to Mr Thomas.

However Lenham Parish Council spokesman Margot McFarlane says that she's happy to be working with the council on the plan.

She told KoS: "We're open minded on housing numbers and are working very closely with the council. Obviously we'd like to see less houses, and in better locations, but we aren't NIMBYs, and we don't want to stop development. People do need houses here."

"The plan has been quite some time coming, but I suppose it's such an important thing, it's good the council is taking its time to actually make sure it's right for everyone in the borough."

David Burton is the chair of MBC's strategic planning, sustainability and transport committee, which is heading up the plan.

Cllr Burton said that the council would protect the countryside and open spaces in the borough, but that it's crucial for the plan to move faster now.

Cllr Burton said: "Once the plan is in place we will be able to defend against inappropriate applications for further development. It's important that we achieve the 2016 deadline, otherwise we run the risk of needing to extend the plan period."

Mr Thomas isn't so sure the plan will protect open spaces, telling KoS the housing target is too high, and the sites which are being promoted for building are poorly located.

He said: "If the county town of Kent isn't able to get this right, what hope have people in other districts and boroughs got. The public here seem to have been consistently ignored by the council and their councillors who are supposed to represent constituents."



# New Medway growth chief looks to draw developments together

Richard Hicks was appointed just weeks ago but is already hard at work with grand plans for the area – including Rochester Riverside – over the long term. He talks to reporter **Jamie Weir...**

**C**HANGING the image of a place is never easy, with towns and cities across the country struggling to shake negative perceptions that affect tourism, growth and an area's prospects of attracting new business.

Medway has always been one of those places, with many people imagining the area hasn't moved on since its industrial past, recalling the bleak days in 1984 when the dockyard was shut down for its final time. More than 7,000 skilled jobs from a variety of trades were lost, and trauma caused to the tight knit community were significant.

Despite those setbacks, perceptions of the area are slowly but surely changing, and Medway's newly appointed regeneration chief, Richard Hicks – who's tasked with not only continuing to deliver day to day services for people, but also growing its cultural, community and redevelopment offerings – says that they're set for radical alteration as he takes control of pushing the area forward.

"A lot of people, when they think of Medway, believe it's all high-density, crowded, urban and industrial," explains Mr Hicks.

He continued: "That isn't the reality at all in Medway these days, and to an extent despite parts which were industrial, it never was. Actually 50 per cent of Medway is rural, with areas that have designations for wildlife and some wonderful green spaces, even in the more urban areas."

But perceptions can be hard to change, even when they're incorrect, as Mr Hicks is all too well aware.

That's why he's looking to spearhead a wide range of new redevelopments which will see much of the banks of the River Medway transformed into a vibrant, high-tech area which will bring in business, tourists and new residents.

Former riverside sites used for heavy industry have been swept away, with a fresh blank canvas ready to paint a new picture of prosperity and growth – as well as the all-important heritage of the area – for future generations.

The biggest of these sites, says the 47-year-old Medway native, is the Rochester Riverside. He calls it a key strategic priority, telling KoS it will be one of the biggest brownfield regeneration sites in the country.

He said: "It could deliver up to 1,400 new homes in the area which would make a big difference, and its location, which is just a stone's throw away from the centre of the historic Rochester High Street is absolutely ripe for this kind of redevelopment."

That heritage connection is immensely important to Mr Hicks, who has lived in the area for much of his life after being born near Gillingham, and attending school in Medway.

He cites the cultural offering of the



area – with festivals, sporting activities and historic buildings – as one of the primary things he'll be looking to promote.

But it isn't just heritage which will be important for drawing investment into the area, and Mr Hicks knows that, telling KoS that the Rochester Riverside regeneration programme could bring with it some fairly critical infrastructure improvements.

He told KoS: "The redevelopment will also be partnered by National Rail's relocation of Rochester train station. They are set to move it into the heart of the town, making it a prime location for business looking to relocate from London, and for people who want somewhere close for the commute."

"It makes sense for a business which wants all of the benefits of being extremely close to London, but without the hefty costs attached to look at relocating somewhere like Rochester."

Transport infrastructure is key to plans to draw in business according to the new director of regeneration, community and culture.

And although a quick rail connection up to the capital is helpful for the area's expansion, he also says the airport is ripe for work to be done too.

He told KoS: "We'll be looking to expand Rochester Airport's capabilities as well. The airport currently has two grass runways, but we'll get one of those modernised, allowing the same capacity but with just one runway. "That would free up space for a new building which could be used for business. We already have an innovation centre on the site, and that's almost full so it's definitely time to help with the expansion of the airport which should generate around 1,000 jobs."

That kind of support for business is key to Mr Hicks' strategy for the future.

He told KoS: "We want to show that we'll back business in Medway and that if it chooses to come here, we'll help to support it where it needs that support."

One way Mr Hicks is already signalling support is by helping to provide the workers of the future for the area's business community.

He told KoS: "I'm extremely proud



**FUTURE:** Rochester Riverside is a strategic priority and could deliver some 1,400 much-needed new homes



**VISION:** Artists' impressions of what some of the future developments at Rochester Riverside could look like

of the educational offering which Medway has built up over the years. In 1998 when the council was first created, there were no universities here. Now we have four, with a range of higher learning establishments, the most recent of which is the Medway University Technical College.

"When you take the tourism industry, and creative industries together, it accounts for around 15 per cent of the jobs we have in the area. That's thousands of employment opportunities, and I want to drive growth forward in those sectors. That means working with our learning providers to ensure we have a workforce which has those skills for the future growth of the area. We're already doing that, and I'd like to continue to grow that work we're doing."

One development – not in Medway, but nearby on the Swanscombe Peninsular – has potential to provide a steady stream of jobs for many of

Medway's residents for decades to come. That, of course, is the London Paramount entertainment resort which, it has been said, could provide up to 27,000 jobs for the area; something Mr Hicks is particularly excited about.

He told KoS: "Medway, alongside other north Kent councils like Dartford, Gravesham and Swale, has been in discussion with the developers."

"Obviously we are in a prime position to take advantage of the job creation, and the massive investment which could be poured into the area as we're located just a few miles away from the site. It's my hope that Medway will benefit from the park, and I'll certainly be working to ensure we're well placed to be part of it as it goes forward."

Although that particular development has won plaudits from many watching it progress, one which the council is pushing forward with has proved less popular. That's the Lodge

Hill site, which the council wants to build thousands of new homes on.

The former military site has had a controversial past, with environmental campaigners working to block any development there. Many opposed to development at Lodge Hill thought they'd won a significant victory when it was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 2013. However the council remains wedded to pushing for building on the brownfield – or formerly developed – land.

Mr Hicks said: "It's certainly a site which the council feel is key to development in Medway, and one which we'll be pushing forward with."

"Although Land Securities pulled out of the site, there's already another delivery partner in place, and we'll obviously be taking that forward when the public enquiry to determine whether development can go ahead takes place."





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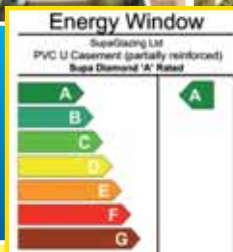
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# County prepares for the worst as pothole season gets under way

Council highways chiefs say that despite the problem being an ongoing one, their 'find and fix' scheme over the summer has made the county's roads as rock solid as they can be but campaigners want government to do more...

**Jamie Weir**

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

**P**APERING over the cracks won't work when it comes to potholes, according to motoring campaigners.

The RAC released its Motoring Report in mid-September which found that potholes are one of the key issues motorists across the county care about, with 10 per cent of drivers saying the state of their local roads were their number one motoring concern.

It's something which even the chancellor, George Osborne has admitted is a problem, when he told the country during the budget that despite four fifths of journeys taking place via road, our network ranks behind Puerto Rico.

Spokesman for the Kent Association of British Drivers, Terry Hudson, told KoS that the problem was only going to get worse.

He said: "There's no quick fix anymore. The roads are in such a state at this point that it'll cost a lot of money to sort everything out and make it good."

It will indeed cost a lot - according to government estimates it could be up to £8.6 billion for roads across the nation. Industry lobby group the Asphalt Industry Alliance priced it at an even more eye-watering £11.5 billion to bring English roads up to standard. In Kent, a full fix for roads to get them into the best state would cost an eye-watering £220 million - money the council cannot afford after having 40 per cent trimmed from its budget since austerity began.

But Mr Hudson said that actually, when you stopped to consider how much a decent infrastructure was worth to the county, that kind of investment started to make sense.

He said: "My group worked out that the government makes around £5.5 million per hour out of the motorist. That's around £50 billion a year, yet government has only allocated £6 billion to maintaining its roads.

"We seem to have a history of doing everything on the cheap on our road network. Just look at how potholes get fixed - they're just quickly filled and patched up, rather than the road itself fixed properly. That just means the problems will come back over and over again, and our roads never get any better."

That's an allegation which KCC transport chief, Matthew Balfour, refutes, telling KoS the authority has been working hard to deal

with potholes over the summer months, making sure that each one they mend is repaired for the long term.

He told KoS: "Our contractors are making potholes they fix good for the long term. They aren't doing quick fixes on any of the jobs they do.

"Despite that, we have managed to lower the cost of each pothole we're getting fixed. We've done that by making better use of information, and maximising efficiency to still provide a first time fix."

The actual process sees contractors using what KCC calls a 'permanent patching' solution. That means the road surface is square-cut around the pothole to enable the removal of debris before a bonding agent is placed inside the hole. The final stage sees hot asphalt placed in the hole, before being compressed to provide a level road surface.

That type of patching - according to highways chiefs at the council - allows workers to tackle groups of potholes in one go, ensuring that road damage is minimised and the road surface is less likely to break up again.

The council says that 90 per cent of potholes fixed in this way are permanent, first time fixes, ensuring that cash isn't being poured into a problem that's likely to repeat itself. After the potholes have been filled, where possible KCC contractors will also lay a protective surface coat of asphalt and chippings to try and prevent any more deterioration of the road surface.

It's also good news for local contractors, with Cllr Balfour saying that much of the work on the roads is being put out to local businesses.

He said: "I am delighted that we were able to deliver this work through local firms thus contributing to local economy and employment."

It does appear the county council has made ground in its fight against crumbling tarmac this year.

Its pothole blitz over the summer has seen KCC's 'find and fix' campaign permanently patch more than 100,000 square metres of the county's roads - around 200 kilometres of the 8,700 kilometre road network. Last year was also a success for KCC tackling potholes, which led to it being deemed a top performing authority in filling the cracks.

That meant government gave it a greater share of cash to keep on fixing them. The council then pumped an extra £2 million into the pothole fund doled out by central govern-





**CRUMBLING:** Despite the problems on our roads KCC is doing better than most at tackling the issue of potholes and (right) Cllr Matthew Balfour, KCC environment and highways cabinet member

ment to help shore up roads that had been left crumbling following brutal conditions during the 2013 winter.

Cllr Balfour said: "We have made additional investment in addressing road repairs over the past few years with our find and fix pro-

grammes. This summer's successful 'find and fix' campaign has enabled us to repair a substantial amount of road damage and potholes.

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"While seven or eight years ago when we had a very bad winter the average repairs times were six weeks, the average repair time for potholes that are not part of the find and fix programme is around 14 days – around half our target time of 28 days."

Despite all that cash flooding into repairs the RAC says that KCC and other councils should still be doing more to look after their roads.

RAC chief engineer David Bizley said: "Motorists clearly want the government to provide sufficient funding to ensure local roads are maintained properly, but while any central government money given to local authorities for roads must be spent on roads, we also need councils to spend more of their own funds on repairing and replacing road surfaces."

"Currently, this is a challenge as they are under specific legal obligation to provide minimum standards in education and social services whereas their obligations to maintain roads are far less prescriptive."

"It is therefore inevitable that expenditure is biased against investment in the likes of road maintenance where prescriptive legal obligations do not exist and councillors therefore do not face legal sanctions."

"This significant and damaging disconnection between what a large proportion of council tax payers want local government to spend their money on and where it is actually going is at least in part a result of the inconsistent way in which central government devolves spending decisions to local authorities."

Perhaps surprisingly, it's not something which Mr Hudson agrees with. Instead, he lays the blame at government's door, telling KoS that councils shouldn't bear the cost of road maintenance when it's a national problem – something Cllr Balfour concurs with.

Mr Hudson said: "In a time of repeated budget cuts for local councils, I think it's unfair to criticise KCC for not spending enough money on dealing with potholes. It is undoubtedly a key issue, and I'm sure KCC could do things better."

"However they shouldn't be asked to pay more cash when Kent's road network is a national issue. KCC has a number of different priorities, and I think we'd all be shocked if roads were higher up than something like education or healthcare."

"The problem comes because they're not well enough funded to actually pay for this vital road maintenance."

It isn't just KCC which shoulders the burden of repairing potholes though.

The county council only tackles those on more minor roads, while motorways and major A roads which run through Kent are dealt with by Highways England – the government owned company tasked with maintaining and growing the country's major road network.

A Highways England spokesperson said: "Safety is the top priority for Highways England and we will repair any significant defects as soon as possible, typically within 24 hours for emergency repairs. In this year we're investing over £200 million across the south east to maintain our roads, which includes resurfacing."

## WHY DO THEY KEEP COMING BACK?

POTHoles occur due to a combination of harsh weather and poor road surfaces.

Road surfaces are designed with slight curvature to allow rain water to drain off them.

However, the strain of heavy cars driving at speed over the surface of the road will normally lead to small cracks forming on the top layer of the road.

During the winter months, these tiny cracks will allow water to seep into them.

That water will expand once frozen, forcing the cracks apart.

When the sun comes out and the water melts, the crack will be slightly larger.

As the process is repeated, those cracks grow larger as heavy traffic rolls over them.

The constant contraction and expansion as water freezes and thaws alongside the battering the road surface takes from vehicles will eventually lead the crack to form into the pothole as material from the road surface is broken up.

The more severe the weather, and the greater the frequency of temperature swings which cause the freeze/thaw cycle, the more likely potholes are to form.

They'll normally occur between autumn and through the following spring.

The challenge when attempting to repair potholes is ensuring no moisture can get in to them after they've been repaired.

Kent County Council uses a



special bitumen sealant which helps to protect the pothole from any water ingress into cracks after repair.

The hope is that the special sealing will stop water from leaching into gaps left during the fixing process so that the freeze and thaw cycle is stopped.

Despite that, potholes remain a serious problem across the county, with new potholes forming during bouts of cold weather.

Kent County Council has developed a system for people

who spot a pothole and want to get it fixed.

Potholes and other faults on the county's roads can be flagged up to the council's highways department online by visiting [www.kent.gov.uk/highways](http://www.kent.gov.uk/highways)

The council says that details of the pothole, or any other issue can be easily uploaded, with locations pinpointed on an interactive map.

The simple system allows any member of the public to let KCC know that a pothole is in need of fixing.



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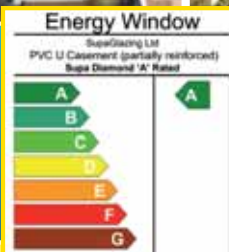
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**DIRECT FROM A SELL-OUT WEST END SEASON**



# Music star's selfless bid to help others

A member of popular group Camera Obscura, Carey Lander, 33, is fighting a losing battle against cancer, but a web page she set up to raise funds for charity is now on the verge of exceeding £50,000...

By Molly Kersey  
molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

**A** CHARITY fundraising web page, set up by one of the stars of a popular band who is dying from an aggressive form of bone cancer, is now closing in on £50,000 - far exceeding her original target.

Carey Lander, 33, who plays piano in indie band Camera Obscura - which has toured extensively and had two albums in the UK top 40 - had hoped to raise £10,000 for a cancer charity.

But she exceeded her target in just two days and as the money has continued to roll-in, she has continued to raise her target in a bid to keep the money flooding in for the charity Sarcoma.

But, tragically, she admits it is "probably too late for me" but is determined to help ease the suffering of children who are the most likely to fall victim to the condition.

Ms Lander, who grew up in Maidstone, was first diagnosed with osteosarcoma in 2011.

Although she seemed to be in remission after she was first treated, the cancer returned, and has now reached a point where it is inoperable - leaving her family and friends heartbroken.

The musician wrote on her Just Giving page: "It's an aggressive form of bone cancer that's treated with a very harsh regime of chemotherapy and surgery or possible amputation of the affected limb."

"Particularly horribly, it's a cancer that most commonly occurs in children and because of its rarity, receives scarce attention or funding and there has been very little in the way of new treatments developed in the last 30 years. It's probably too late to help



**PAIN:** Camera Obscura, with Carey Lander, right, and inset.

me, but it would be great if we could find something in the future that means children don't have to undergo such awful treatment and have a better chance of survival."

The musician spent her childhood in the county, attending Eastborough Primary School and Maidstone Grammar School for Girls.

She always had an interest in music, having violin lessons from the age of six and performing in the Kent Mu-

sic School orchestra.

After completing her A Levels in 2000 she went to Glasgow, where her older brother owned a flat, and began playing the keyboard with Camera Obscura, who at that stage were gathering a reputation and attracting the support of the likes of the legendary DJ John Peel.

The band was forced to cancel touring plans last month as a result of Ms Lander's condition.

Her mother Eileen, who lived in Maidstone for 30 years and is now a vicar at Woodnesborough, near Sandwich, said: "We knew at Christmas 2010 she was experiencing some pain in her leg, but when she was diagnosed with osteosarcoma in February 2011 it was a huge shock to us all."

"Even then most of us did not know the full implications, how aggressive it is, how horrendous the treatment."

"The chemo was administered in hospital, in monthly cycles of three weeks on, one off, but that fourth week she was usually ill from the effects and was often re-admitted."

"Her leg was operated on in June, followed by a further year of chemo. After that we all breathed a sigh of relief."

"It was short lived though, as less than a year later a 'spot' appeared on her lung, which is how this particular cancer progresses. Then, less than a year later, more tumours, and it has now progressed very quickly, and the doctors are unable to operate."

"When it went to the lungs, I realised, this can't be good. I faced the point that it could be terminal. I still

hoped it could be five, even 20 years and that we would toddle on to each next blip, but that came much faster, much more quickly after the spot on the lung appeared."

"They carried out a keyhole operation and said it was all clear. Then this year, in June, she found a lump on the scar - it was cancerous. She was on holiday in France and determined to carry on but it was so quick. She was struggling to breathe. We all realised - this is going to be it."

Mrs Lander has been frequently travelling to Glasgow, where her daughter is currently in hospital.

She added: "We've done a lot of journeys but she has been very positive and amazingly brave."

"It's been horrendous. As a mother, you need to make everything better and you can't and I can't see her to see how she is. It has been made much harder by the distance."

"She's needs to get oxygen to breathe. We know she is dying now. We just don't know how long we have. It does seem to be moving very fast now."

Ms Lander had raised more than £42,000 earlier this week - with celebrity backers including TV presenter Dermot O'Leary and Franz Ferdi-

nand singer Alex Kapranos sharing her campaign on their Twitter accounts.

International make-up brand Wearefaux has joined in the fundraising with a range of fake red eyelashes called Carey Rouge, to help raise more money for the cause.

As well as this, Maidstone salon Hair Professional, owned by Ms Lander's former school friend Anthea Mitchell, will be using them in an autumn photoshoot on October 4 to raise awareness.

Ms Lander's mother added: "It is just terribly sad that Carey's life will be so short. I know she wants to leave good behind her, so raising money for Sarcoma UK is her way of doing this, in the hope others and their families won't suffer in the way we all have."

"The amount of money she has raised so far is amazing, and a means of some comfort to her and all of us, her family and friends. We all read all the messages that are left on the Just Giving site, and it helps us to see how much she is known and loved."

■ To donate visit [www.justgiving.com/Carey-Lander](http://www.justgiving.com/Carey-Lander). To find out more about the charity, Sarcoma UK, visit its website [www.sarcoma.org.uk](http://www.sarcoma.org.uk).

## BAND HIT THE RIGHT NOTE

CAMERA Obscura are an indie pop band based in Scotland who came to prominence around the turn of the millennium.

Carey Lander joined the band several years after it first formed in 1996, and was in time to help record a celebrated session for BBC Radio 1 legend John Peel.

She then toured with the band extensively through the UK and America. They have released five albums, the most commercially successful being My Maudlin Career in 2009 and 2013's Desire Lines.

After the return of Ms Lander's cancer, the band confirmed at the end of August it was "shelving all work commitments for the time being".

Singer Tracyanne Campbell said: "We're really sad to disappoint our fans but I'm sure everyone will understand that Carey's health needs to come

first at this time."

Ms Lander wrote on her Just Giving page: "I've been quite fortunate in that I have been able to have periods of living something of a normal life in the last four years and to continue playing with Camera Obscura."

"Being able to record the album we had started working on before my diagnosis, and play shows again has been amazing, and I'm very grateful to everyone that's bought out records, come to our concerts or supported us in some way."

A statement from the band said: "We're really proud of Carey, as a friend and bandmate, for the way she has been dealing with her illness, and how she has very publicly set up this campaign for Sarcoma UK to help future sufferers hopefully receive more effective treatment and have a brighter future."



# Capturing the county's evolution

Google's popular Street View service has recently allowed users to take a walk back seven years to highlight the changes since the service first launched.

By Chris Britcher  
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

**T**HE pace of change, as we all know in this county, can belt along at a merry pace.

But as the relentless demand for land shows no signs of slowing – whether it be for commercial or residential opportunities – a clever mechanism recently added to search engine Google's popular Street View system allows you to do just that.

Street View, a sometimes controversial addition to the firm's portfolio, takes images of all streets, knits them together and allows the user to effective 'walk down' virtual streets.

It now covers much of the world.

But now it allows users to click on images and take a walk back through time – or six to seven years to be precise – and witness just how much things have changed in such a short amount of time.

Users can now see images captured by the Google camera car over the years which highlights just how significant some changes have been – and how quickly we become familiar with the new and forget the past.

Over the following few pages, we take a look at some major developments in and around the county and show how fields or buildings have gone, to be replaced by the new.

To access them yourself, just search Google Street View.



ASHFORD has seen more change than most over the years with an explosion in the number of homes

and developments over the years. The town centre has changed plenty too, with its library, in



particular, undergoing a major re-build that was completed in 2011.



WHILE Canterbury city centre's historic walls have limited much significant development, with the

exception of Whitefriars, outside, much continues to evolve. What was once a Blockbuster video



store in St George's Place is now a Premier Inn hotel with extensive other work transforming the street.

LEEDS  CASTLE

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MEDWAY is evolving at a remarkable rate as what was once its thriving docks



turned into a blend of housing and fresh industry. The former Pentagon bus

stop was replaced with this, in Chatham, in 2011 - the new waterside bus station.



MAIDSTONE United fans went on a long journey to



see their club finally return to the county town, with a

Whatman Way turned from a field into a stadium.



TAKING a drive around the outskirts of Ashford for anyone who has not visited



for a few years will bring plenty of discovery. One of the town's most welcome

additions has been the John Lewis at Home store close to junction 9 of the M20.



THE outskirts of Maidstone seem to be continually eyed up by developers, espe-



cially like this site on Bearsted Road, close to junction 7 of the M20. The giant

Next store adds to a growing development which includes hotels and businesses.

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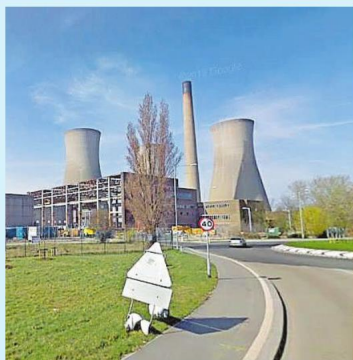
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THOUSANDS lined the roads and countryside in 2012 to watch one of east



Kent's most significant landmarks tumble when the cooling towers at

Richborough power station near Sandwich were blown up.



PERCHED high on St John's Road, overlooking Tunbridge Wells, the Kent &



Sussex Hospital was sold off and closed in 2011 to help fund the state-of-the-art

Tunbridge Wells at Pembury. Today it is becoming a major housing location.



MARGATE'S Turner Contemporary art gallery



had a difficult birth but finally emerged in 2011

and has proved a huge hit on the sea wall.



BACK in 2008, the cinema in the heart of Tunbridge Wells

had already been shut for eight years. Today, it has



been pulled down. But still no replacement building.

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# KCC plans shake-up of elderly care

Consultation on future of four council-run homes – in Maidstone, Sheerness, Faversham and Sandwich – begins as KCC reveals the ‘under threat’ homes cost it £4million a year to run...

by Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

**T**WO under-used care homes in Kent could be closed within the next six months if the county council gets its way.

The two homes which provide care for elderly residents would shut straight if the council gets the green light following a public consultation.

A third home would be sold off to a private operator, while the council says that a fourth home would close once alternative care services had progressed enough to replace it.

The closures could result in a total of 223 jobs being lost.

The homes – which are Dorothy Lucy Centre, Maidstone; Blackburn Lodge, Sheerness; Kiln Court, Faversham and Wayfarers, Sandwich – were built between 1982 and 1988.

The two which KCC propose closing, the Dorothy Lucy Centre and Kiln Court, are no longer considered fit for purpose in the longer-term according to the council.

They are also severely under-used according to KCC, with just one resident living in each of them.

The council says that there is ample capacity to take up those

residents in the local areas.

Graham Gibbens, KCC cabinet member for adult social care and public health, said: “KCC is a commissioning authority which contracts with the independent sector for over 90 per cent of services for adult social care.

“We propose to close two of our homes because they are under-used and the buildings cannot provide quality care into the future without significant investment.

“We are confident that there is sufficient alternative accommodation in the Maidstone and Faversham areas for the residents of the Dorothy Lucy Centre and Kiln Court, with plans to progress the development of modern care services on the Isle of Sheppey to ensure the current residents of Blackburn Lodge, and future people needing care, remain in their local community.”

The proposals have been drawn up by KCC because more people are living longer and expecting more choice in their care. Many elderly people now want to be able to remain in their own homes, and receive support instead of moving to a residential care home.

The council says the homes were built at a time when there was less choice and fewer options for people



**THREAT:** Blackburn Lodge would be close once other services are developed. KCC's Graham Gibbens (above)

living longer. Now the council says more sheltered accommodation and nursing homes, which offer medical as well as personal care, are required.

One reason for shutting two of the sites, and taking action on the other two is that the homes cost the council around £4 million a year in running costs.

KCC says a chunk of that money would be saved if the proposals went

ahead, with the two homes which would be closed able to be sold on to developers that wouldn't be compelled to keep them as care homes.

Despite that, KCC said that money wasn't its primary consideration.

Cllr Gibbens said: “The well-being of the residents that live at, or frequently use the homes is our first and foremost consideration. They are being kept up to date with proposed

changes and we will be working with them and their carers to continue to meet their needs.”

The consultation – which started on September 28 – will run for 12 weeks, closing on December 20.

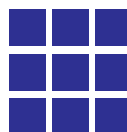
The final decision on whether the proposals should be brought in will be taken on January 18, with changes expected to be introduced from February 2016.

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This independent jeweller, sat mid-way along the Broadway in the heart of Bexleyheath, has been serving its local community for almost a quarter of a century. The shop has been a home to fine jewellery since 1938 when it was Ellis & Walkers, building a tradition of fine craftsmanship and fabulous jewellery for Bexley's residents.

Broadway the Jewellers is proud to continue to tread that heritage path, offering a wide range of high quality pieces, also using the finest materials to make bespoke creations for it's clients.

The shop's aim is to provide its discerning customers with only the best new, second hand and antique jewellery. Quality used Rolex watches and brand new daily wear watches are also available alongside a large range of silver and pewter giftware for all occasions.

The highly experienced team of staff are led by a store manager with over 25 years working in the jewellery professions, his own training having led him to a Diploma from the Gemmological Association. The staff all aim to provide the highest levels of expert service, whether the customer chooses to buy, or sell at the store. There is a continued programme of learning for all members of staff, with many completing industry accredited courses like the Jewellery and Education Training programme.

As an independent retailer, Broadway the Jewellers is able to stock a more varied range of sparkling goodies, helping customers find the perfect present whatever the oc-

casion. The jeweller can suit any budgets offering the highest quality to allow everyone to enjoy the perfect gift. Items can be bought with deposits of as little as 20 per



cent and a whole six months to pay the balance. And if you don't see what you want in stock at the shop, they are able to create bespoke commissions for clients who fancy something a little different.

Services at the jewellers don't stop once you've bought your item. They are also able to offer other services, such as valuations, engraving, watch and jewellery servicing and repairs.

As members of the National Association of Jewellers, the National Pawnbrokers Association and the Gemmological Association, customers can be sure that they are getting the best advice and goods when they buy from Broadway the Jewellers. And the shop isn't just about your purchase. They also look to buy fine jewellery & quality watches for re-sale or recycling and can lend money against these items.

The fine jewellers have spent over two decades building their reputation as purveyors of high quality jewellery. They look forward to welcoming you to their store.

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**FIRE:** Soldiers from 3 PWRR get ready to shine during exercise with Canadian troops

# Canadian jaunt for our soldiers

From military exercises to an international Army shooting contest, trips have brought success...

**By Chris Britcher**

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

**S**OLDIERS based in the county have just returned from two separate trips across the Atlantic – one for a major military exercise, the other to compete in a sporting contest to find the best military marksman.

Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (3 PWRR) – also known as The Tigers – are normally based at Howe Barracks.

But two trips have recently seen them swap their Canterbury base for life in Canada.

The first saw eight infantrymen join the Canadian Army Reserve on Exercise Stalwart Guardian.

They were fully integrated with their Canadian counterparts during the two week exercise in Petawawa having flown into Toronto.

The exercise had two distinct phases – the first involving both defensive and offensive operations which tested all their infantry skills as well as their ability to work as a team in a tough environment.

Pte Paddy McLaughlin, 27, from Folkestone, said: "I am quite new to the battalion, so to have the opportunity to come to Canada on this exercise was amazing.

"The things we have done have been great; a fantastic experience and the Canadian soldiers we have had the chance to work with have been first rate, completely professional."

Just a matter of days after their return, a second set of 3 PWRR personnel headed off to Canada.



**ACTION:** The Tigers won praise for their efforts on a recent trip across the Atlantic

Five soldiers and one officer set off to represent not only the battalion but also the Army Reserve as a whole in a shooting competition at Connaught Ranges near Ottawa.

They were joined by six members from 154 Logistics Regiment; a transport regiment based in Scotland to form the British Army Reserve Competition Shooting Team (BARCST).

On arrival, the 12-strong team enjoyed three days of practice before beginning a three-day individual competition. Following the individual competition was a six-day team event.

This involved the same weapons used across the same ranges.

The team competed against up to 20 Canadian teams from their regular, reserve and ranger units. As well as competing against a team from the US Army Reserve and teams representing the British regular Army and the Royal Air Force.

Colour Sergeant Mark

Young, 52, from Sheerness, said: "While the whole experience of being in Canada has been good, being able to conduct the dynamic pistol shoots has been great. The realism of those ranges was fantastic and thoroughly enjoyable."

The battalion is based across the south east with units in Brighton, Canterbury, Eastbourne, Farnham and Rochester.



North & West

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# 'Tis the season to quit our vices in battle against booze and fags

October has been identified as the month for health organisations to encourage us to cut down on our alcohol intake and quit smoking. We take a close-up look at the two campaigns now rolling out

By Luke May & Tom Pyman  
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

**Y**OU MAY find normally calm and rational friends and family a little tense this weekend as they enter a crunch time in their efforts to finally kick a habit which is fast becoming socially unacceptable.

Stoptober is a high profile campaign organised by Public Health England designed to encourage smokers to put down their cigarettes for the duration of October, with a view to then kicking the habit for good.

The argument is well-trodden and compelling – smoking brings with it a myriad of health risks, costs a fortune, and puts an enormous financial strain on our health services coping with the ailments it can cause.

Smoking is on the ropes, it seems, but delivering that last knock out blow remains a challenge.

In 1979 some 45 per cent of the British population smoked.

But as prices rose and the sheer extent of the health issues were hammered home, so the figures fell. With the smoking ban in pubs, restaurants, offices and venues kicking in in 2007, by 2013, that figure stood at just 19.3 per cent – the lowest for 80 years.

In the south east, the latest statistics demonstrate some 17.2 per cent smoke – one of the lowest figures in the country. But Kent continues to light up in numbers. According to the Kent Public Health Observatory – which provides statistics and research into key medical issues – with an average of 19 per cent (that's just under one in five) still puffing away.

The trick now is reaching out to them and ensuring they have the support needed to accompany the will-power required to final stub out the habit.

Kent Community Health, which delivers NHS services direct to people's homes and communities, has

long been running 'quit clubs' to help smokers kick the habit. In recent years they have accelerated the number of clubs to help tackle the pockets of persistent smokers in traditionally deprived areas – such as Thanet, Swale and Shepway.

Explains spokeswoman Jo Treharne: "The service we offer is focused on helping those looking to quit. We need them to work with us to help them break free."

"We don't do preachy or patronising – our focus is on helping people." Operating via the Stop Smoking Kent umbrella, it has a core team of 36 people spearheading a push which includes 455 community-based advisors based in more than 270 venues across the county.

In addition to quit clubs, it offers drop-in centres, advice over the phone and the internet, and even one-to-one counselling across venues as diverse as hospitals, supermarkets, children's centre to prisons.

"People think they'll have to stand up and say my name's so-and-so and I'm a smoker," explains Ms Treharne, "but it's not like that at all."

Its quit clubs, for example, offer a seven-week programme offering support and helps smokers to understand why they feel sudden cravings, and how to cope.

Anyone can join and with a one off prescription charge can receive nicotine replacement therapy, with addi-

tional medicine available from your GP. Anyone can sign-up and you don't need the referral of a GP.

In Kent, the highest concentration of smokers are in Thanet (24.8 per cent still smoke), Dover (24.3 per cent), and Shepway (22 per cent).

It continues to be the case that where unemployment rates are high, then smoking remains most prevalent. But that is a sweeping generalisation and it is hoped high profile campaigns such as Stoptober, which calls on famous faces such as the Pub Landlord, Al Murray, and comics Bill Bailey and Rhod Gilbert to help encourage more to quit, it will see smoking rates continue to fall.

Last year around 260,000 people took part, as more and more people look to find ways to kick the habit.

Studies suggest those that can go 28 days without smoking are five times more likely to kick the habit for good. In Kent, NHS stop smoking services are running at additional times during the day as well as evenings and weekends to accommodate people's busy schedules.

Ms Treharne added: "People are ten times more likely to quit successfully with support services. Just five per cent of people who try to quit cold turkey on their own succeed."

■ For more information visit [www.kenthealthandwellbeing.nhs.uk](http://www.kenthealthandwellbeing.nhs.uk) or telephone 0300 1231220. Or visit [www.stoptober.co.uk](http://www.stoptober.co.uk).



**QUIT:** A variety of support mechanisms are available to help smokers stub out the habit

**D**RINKERS are being encouraged to 'Go Sober for October' as part of a charity campaign.

Run by Macmillan Cancer Support, it is returning for a third year after hugely successful campaigns in 2013 and 2014 that invited people over the age of 18 to become 'Sober Heroes' and give up alcohol for the month of October, and raise money for a worthy cause in the process.

Over 100,000 people took part last year and £4.2million was raised.

So far, those taking part have raised at least £17,000 across the county through pledges – one of the top 10 most generous counties.

Heather Pearl, national events marketing manager for the charity, told KoS of the importance of the campaign. She explained: "Those taking part might expect to see a number of benefits, ranging from an increase in energy levels and higher productivity, to a clearer head, as well as a clearer complexion."

"In addition to generally feeling healthier, those taking part will be doing something amazing for people affected by cancer and should feel a real sense of achievement afterwards."

"Whilst it is true that the more alcohol someone drinks the greater the overall health risk, this initiative is

not about encouraging people to drink less for health reasons. Go Sober for October is a fundraising campaign, aimed at challenging social drinkers to take on the challenge of changing their habits for a month."

Kent County Council has a history of supporting a number of national campaigns including Dry January and Alcohol Awareness Week in November.

Director of public health, Andrew Scott-Clark, said: "Although the vast majority of people in Kent enjoy drinking alcohol sensibly and within recommended guidelines, it is paramount that we take early action because alcohol related harm is largely preventable. However, we can't do this alone and everyone needs to think about how much and how often they drink so we welcome campaigns which help people to realise how much they are drinking and take action to cut down."

So do the success of Go Sober for October, Dry January and other events that encourage people to abstain from drinking have any effect on Kent's bars and pubs?

Mark Powell, owner of The Plough in Wilmington, Dartford, fully supports such campaigns, and is currently embarking upon one of his own. "I've been doing the Dryathlon throughout 2015," he said.

"It began on New Year's Eve last



**CHEERS:** Raising money for Macmillan's cancer nurses

year when I got absolutely mangled and I thought to myself 'that's it, I've North & West

got to stop'. I wanted to get my fitness up because I'm a keen mountain run-

ner. Someone bet me that I couldn't go the whole year without drinking so I took the bet and I haven't touched a drop since December 31.

"It's getting a lot easier with time. The first couple of months were very difficult when everyone around me was drinking but everyone's been very supportive."

"The impact on my business has been minimal, I wouldn't say we lose many customers during those periods. We've got regulars who won't necessarily avoid the pub, they might just choose to have a soft drink instead."

Similarly, Adrian Oliver, owner of The Freewheel in Graveney, near Faversham, said: "When I opened the pub earlier this year, I wanted to have a much broader offering than a standard village pub. So today we sell as much coffee, tea, apple, pear and other fruit juices as we do alcoholic drinks."

"When we're selecting real ales and local ciders, we are looking for good flavours along with low alcohol levels. I think the future of village pubs is all about being a community hub, not just a place to grab a pint, so if some of my customers Go Sober for October, I'm happy to support them because it's for a good cause."

■ For details on Macmillan's charity push, see [www.gosober.org.uk](http://www.gosober.org.uk).

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**HOME:** Helga is now safe and well at home

# Helga the eagle is safe and well

Concern had been growing for North American bald eagle that went missing on Tuesday...

**Tom Pyman**

Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

**A** North American bald eagle which flew off during a display on Tuesday has returned home.

Helga, a 17-year-old eagle with a seven-foot wingspan, went missing after failing to return during a display on Tuesday afternoon at a popular tourist attraction.

Eddie Hare, owner of the Raptor Centre Wildlife Sanctuary at Groombridge Place, near Tunbridge Wells, has looked after the bird since she was just over four months old, and told KoS of his distress when she went missing.

"I was flying her in a demonstration on Tuesday," he said.

"She went up and up and up and she just looked amazing. I didn't call her down like I usually do because she looked absolutely brilliant.

"My wife asked me to call her down but I didn't want to. It just got to the point where she was looking so beautiful that I thought it would be a shame. I just wanted her to be free and to do her thing.

"I left her and she disappeared into the distance, then a while later I really regretted it."

The exhibitions are a regular and popular event at Groombridge Place and the worry for Mr Hare was that

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this type of disappearing act has never really happened before.

"We have a demonstration every day," he said.

"This one took place at 3.30 and seemed no different to

build up a real connection."

After two days of frantic searching, Helga was eventually found on Thursday night. The centre broke the news for fans of Helga on Facebook.

It said: "Thank you to EVERYONE who has helped us in our search for our beautiful Helga."

People across the area were out in force to help try and spot the eagle, but fears that she would prey on household animals were misplaced according to Mr Hare.

"There's no danger to anybody's pets or anything like that. The only things that she would look to eat would be mice, shrews and rodents," he said.

"Nobody was going to misidentify her, she's very distinctive. She has a seven-foot wingspan, a white head and a white tail."

When the massive bird was found, the centre said that it was overjoyed to have Helga home safely.

North & West



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**ROCK:** Foals, above left, will perform at Dreamland next month in a sell-out show

# Fans flock to be By the Sea as festival takes off

By Molly Kersey  
molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

**D**REAMLAND'S vow to be more than just an amusement park has been underlined by a strong response to a mini music festival it is staging in November.

By the Sea will run from November 13 to 14.

Tickets for the headliners on the second night, The Foals, sold out in minutes. It has also been confirmed that Hot Chip will headline the opening night, with other acts on the support bill set to be revealed this week.

The festival was the brainchild of record label Moshi Moshi and Rockfeedback Concerts.

Moshi Moshi co-founder Michael McClatchey told KoS: "It's such a perfect venue for that kind of festival, because of its history its got a lot of suitable spaces for gigs to happen."

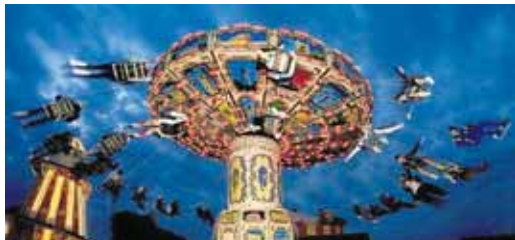
"The timing just worked really well with Dreamland opening and it seemed like the perfect time to start it off."

Not that he is any stranger to the town. He added: "Stephen Bass, my business partner, and me both bought houses in Margate last year and we have slowly been moving down there bit by bit, in between the DIY."

"That's when we first started talking about the idea of doing something in Margate."

The gigs will be taking place in the newly refurbished ballroom and the roller room

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at the popular theme park.

And Mr McClatchey thinks the venue has a lot of potential and could help put Margate on the map as a live music venue.

"They have got an indoor room to open there so they have got more capacity that they can add in. They have also got a place for big outdoor events. I would hope it would be a fantastic live venue," he said.

The opportunity of staging big name acts was highlighted at the re-opening of the park earlier this year. On its first day, it attracted chart-toppers Florence and the Machine as well as perennial favourites Chas 'n' Dave to perform to the crowds.

Adds Mr McClatchey: "Margate has fallen off the live music circuit in the last couple of decades, I would hope that with the opening of Dreamland now is the chance for it to get back on that circuit."

"We had our 'wish list' for this festival and Foals came to us quite fortuitously," he said.

"We hadn't considered them because we didn't think they would come and play a venue that size. We went and asked them and they said yes. That was great and it was a

complete surprise.

"Hot Chip have a long association with Moshi Moshi records, and they are probably our favourite band."

"We will be introducing the rest of the line up next week. We are trying to get a mix of musicians people will know and new bands that people should see."

And he hopes to bring the festival back on a yearly basis.

"We are already idly thinking about next year. It will probably be earlier in the year, the plan originally was to do it in September time, so you catch a little bit of the end of the summer. We have only done it in November this year because we left it so late to start doing everything."

"The plan is for it to happen each year and each year to get a bit bigger and spread beyond Dreamland."

"We want to encourage people to go out into the town and not just stay in the park. We are looking forward to doing a day time event in the Old Town and a record market."

■ **For more information about the festival, visit the website [www.dreamland.co.uk/events](http://www.dreamland.co.uk/events) or visit [www.rockfeedbackconcerts.com](http://www.rockfeedbackconcerts.com) to book tickets.**

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**HITS:** Hot Chip, left, will be playing on the festival's opening night on the Friday. More acts are set to be confirmed this week



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KOS/15







**CHANGE:** Astronomers were transfixed by the red shadow cast on the Moon in the early hours on Monday. Pictures above: DR DAVID REES

# Blood red Moon shines bright as crowds flock to see lunar eclipse

After the disappointment of the solar eclipse earlier this year, the clouds cleared to enable those in the county bright and early on Monday a perfect view of Earth casting a shadow across the Moon

**By Luke May**

luke.may@archant.co.uk

**A**STRONOMERS have hailed the ballet in the sky this week – when a blood red ‘supermoon’ could clearly be seen – as “fantastic”.

After the disappointment earlier this year when the eagerly anticipated near total eclipse of the Sun was obscured by heavy cloud over much of Kent, the lunar eclipse in the early hours of Monday was clear to see.

The result was a “blazingly bright night”, according to observers.

As the Earth cast its shadow over the Moon, it appeared to glow red in the night sky – much to the delight to those watching in awe.

Among the many stargazers and astronomers craning their necks in the county was chairman of the Mid Kent Astronomical Society Ian Hargrave.

He told KoS: “It was fantastic. The sky was so clear, there were stars in the sky you can’t normally see from north Kent.”

Tim Long, of Tigra Astronomy in Canterbury, added: “With the British weather it’s always difficult to predict what we’ll see.

“Fortunately with the clear skies and the darkness during the eclipse, there was plenty to see in the sky.”

Danny Day from the Thanet Astronomical Group, who watched the lunar event from Dumpton Gap, said: “Lots of people came to the night, I’d say at least 20 people, which was a re-

## ...AND THERE WAS EXCITEMENT TOO AS CHANCES OF LIFE ON MARS INCREASED

SCIENTISTS reacted with delight this week as Nasa confirmed what it had long suspected – that gullies on the surface of Mars were caused by flowing water.

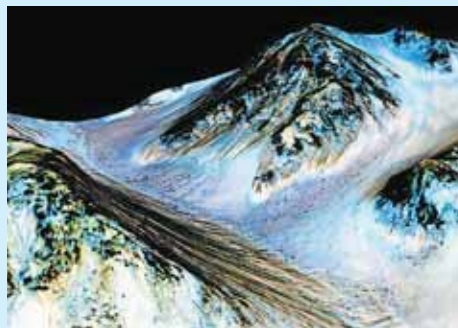
The announcement had been heavily speculated on in the days leading up to the official confirmation and now, tantalisingly, hint at a renewed possibility of the discovery of basic life forms on the surface of the inhospitable planet.

Dr Stephen Lowry, a senior lecturer in astronomy and astrophysics at the University of Kent told KoS: “The new Mars finding is a major result and very important. While liquid water was not directly detected, they certainly have a strong case for showing that liquid water may periodically appear on the surface.”

Scientists had spent months studying mysterious features on Mars that seemed to ebb and flow with the seasons.

The dark streaks appear on sloping ground during late spring and disappear by autumn.

New evidence strongly suggests that they are formed by salty water



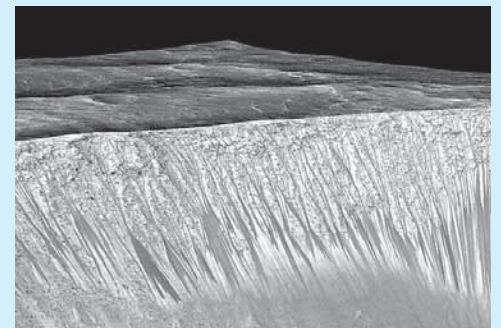
flowing down hillsides, crater rims and canyon walls. The streaks are narrow, typically less than five metres (16.4ft) wide, but can be hundreds of metres long.

In the past, links have been drawn suggesting the presence of water on other planets could be an indicator of life, but Dr Lowry has calmed hopes of any close encounters: “I think that a lot more work is needed before we can link the presence of water on the surface with potential life,

“But I can say that liquid water is fundamentally important to life, at least on Earth.”

Dr Lowry played down the impact on man visiting Mars, stating: “Colonisation is still in the realms of science fiction, and a man on Mars still seems a long way off. It may impact the development of analysis from deposits taken from Mars.”

John Grunsfeld, astronaut and associate administrator of Nasa’s science mission directorate in



Washington DC, said: “The really exciting thing about this is our view of Mars has been really about seeking chemical fossils of past life on Mars. The existence of liquid water, even if it’s super-salty briny water, gives the possibility that if there’s life on Mars we have a way to describe how it might survive.

“We are now at a point technologically... that we have the capability to go there and ask this question – is there life on Mars? And answer it.”

ally good turnout considering it was the early hours of Monday morning and some of our members had to get up for work. The event didn’t really end until 5am.

“On the night we had one woman present who was in her mid-seven-

ties, as well as a 10-year-old.”

A relatively rare occurrence, a supermoon occurs when a lunar eclipse happens at the same time as the Moon’s orbit is at its closest point to earth.

This was the first time the celestial event had happened this century,

North & West

with the next estimated supermoon not appearing in our skies until 2033

The eclipse kept stargazers up throughout Sunday night, finally reaching totality for just over an hour between 3 and 4am on Monday morning.

And the telescopes will be out again

this week, with a meteor show due on Thursday, October 8, and another in November.

Today also marks the start of World Space Week, with a host of special events to fuel interest in the heavens lined up.

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# The grandfather of the modern skyscraper in danger of collapse

Built in the 1850s, the Grade I-listed Sheerness Boat Store is the world's earliest surviving example of a multi-storey iron-frame and panel structure but its future is in the balance says the Victorian Society...

Tom Pyman

Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

**W**HEN the Victorian Society unveiled its annual top 10 of historically significant buildings in desperate need of renovation, many were surprised to see a building in Sheerness on the list.

If, for no other reason, that many were surprised to learn of such a globally influential building lurking on the Isle of Sheppey, without it being on the tourist trail.

But then the Grade I-listed Sheerness Boat Store is not your regular tourist attraction.

It lurks deep behind the strict security of the port area on Sheppey – preventing visitors from sneaking a peek.

It doesn't, in truth, have a conventional beauty, but it is certainly an impressive building with an industrial charm, looming up by the water-side and offering a huge internal space.

Built during the 1850s and completed in 1860, it was constructed by military engineer Colonel GT Green and a civilian architect, who worked for the Royal Navy, called William Scamp.

Its claim to fame is that it stands as the world's earliest surviving example of a multi-storey iron-frame and panel structure.

It may not sound much, but it is the method which takes credit for inspiring the rise of the skyscraper which now dominate the skylines of cities around the world.

Timothy Brittain-Catlin is a teacher at the Kent School of Architecture. He told KoS: "You look at most office buildings today and they resemble the Sheerness Boat Store. But that was not the case back in 1858. Then, it was a pioneering piece of work.

"The boat store is definitely the grandfather of all of them. It's a really important and special building."

But it faces one of the toughest challenges of its long life.

The Victorian Society – a charity which champions Victorian and Edwardian buildings and helps local planning authorities when deciding how to adapt such buildings to the modern age, without losing any of their original charm – is growing increasingly concerned for the building.

Disused for years, it is now beginning to crumble and is in need of extensive – and expensive – repairs to ensure it has a future.

Joe O'Donnell, of the Victorian Society, explained: "It was built by the Navy to store boats which were then worked on and fixed but the Navy is no longer based there and so it has not had a proper use for decades.

"It's been neglected over the years



**BOAT STORE:** Once home to Royal Navy ships awaiting repair, the influential building is now in danger from the aged and now rotting bolts used to make it

and that's the danger, that it would be impossible for it to support itself and keep it for the future, so we are asking for people to help raise awareness by publicising it so as many people see it as possible."

The danger stems from the way it was constructed back in the 19th century, according to Ken Ingleton, of the Sheppey Local History Society.

He explained: "It's not being used for anything at the moment because it's unsafe for people to go into.

"The reason it's becoming unsafe is that the bolts that are holding it together were made by a blacksmith by hand centuries ago and they are deteriorating in strength over time.

"I understand it will take between £3m and £5m to repair, so it's not a cheap job, but it's only the bolts that need replacing, not the whole structure.

"It's close to one of the oldest dry docks in the country, and the general

feeling is that the whole area should become a bit like Chatham Dockyard – a historical dockyard used for heritage purposes and open to the public."

Sheerness' rise and fall very much accompanied that of the Medway towns.

Once a key strategic site for the protection of British waters in the North Sea and at the mouth of where the Thames flows into London, Chatham and Sheerness was built up in tandem as key Naval sites; developing and maintaining the nation's fleet.

But when the Royal Navy need reduced, so did the need for the Kent ports. And Sheerness found itself out of favour.

Which presents a problem for the under threat boat store.

Mr O'Donnell revealed that there has been one party showing interest in making use of the site, but he declined to any shed light or further details at this early stage.

Other uses proposed include using the building as a large storage space for homes and businesses, or transforming it into a flexible office working space. Its location, however, and improvement bill, can deter many.

Dr Brittain-Catlin believes the secluded location adds to its intrigue.

"Dockyards have always been interesting but a lot of the main ones have always been big towns in their own right, Sheerness isn't. When it's hidden away somewhat as Sheerness is, I think it makes the building more enticing, but the place is extremely well protected. If you try and get close, they come after you in an Army Jeep.

"It's not easily accessible because the port is a customs area and you have to go through security where only the appropriate photo ID is acceptable. It's a very secure area," Mr Ingleton added.

A spokesperson for Peel Ports, which owns the building, said: "In

2014 we announced our intention for a 20-year master plan for growth and investment within the Sheerness area. Part of this included a commitment to protecting the heritage assets with the ports, such as the Sheerness boat store.

"We have since initiated investigative works into the repair of the boat store, and are currently in talks with Historic England and Swale Borough Council to determine how best to take this forward.

"Given the historical nature of the building – the boat store is more than 150 years old, and is a Grade I-listed building – it will take some degree of time for us to fully and accurately assess the building and the repair work required.

"We will continue to work with these organisations, as well other industry experts to develop future plans for the long term preservation of the Sheerness boat store."



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**PRAISE:** (above) Certificate of Congratulation recipients Carol Norfolk (Kent Police Control), station manager Lin West, crew manager Kim Varnham, Carina Moore-Kite, group manager Leanne McMahon, John McGonigal, Martin Collins and area manager Steve Jeffery and (above) crew manager Wayne Burney, group manager Nick James and watch manager Mark Jones

# The fire service honours the bravest and best

‘This special event reminds us all of the dedication and courage that is part of the everyday life of our service’ says Kent Fires and Rescue Service chief executive Ann Millington...

**S**TAFF and members of the public were honoured on Tuesday at an awards ceremony for Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS).

The event, which took place at Oakwood House in Maidstone, pays tribute to outstanding actions of bravery and commitment made by people throughout the county.

KFRS chief executive Ann Millington, alongside the Vice Lord-Lieutenant for Kent, Richard Oldfield and the chairman of the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority (KMFRA), Nick Chard, presented the awards to mark ‘the exemplary contribution’ people have made.

Ms Millington said: “This special event reminds us all of the dedication and courage that is part of the everyday life of our service.

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“The awards ceremony gives us the chance to celebrate outstanding examples of bravery and quick thinking that has helped save lives and property. It also recognises the commitment of our staff and members of the public.

“I am incredibly proud not only of the achievements of everyone receiving awards but also the hard work and contribution by all KFRS staff. They work tirelessly and take great pride in helping keep the county a safe place to live and work.

“Our firefighters are incredibly committed and talented people, they do a fantastic job often under the most challenging and arduous of conditions but they do it with humility and dignity and it is an honour to be able to recognise them in this way.

“I would like to express my thanks, not just to them but also to their families for the

support they give behind the scenes.”

A variety of awards were presented, with the prestigious Kent Medal going to Geoff Cousins, who is retiring from the service’s finance department after 15 years and was recognised for his valuable ‘guidance and support’.

Certificates of Congratulation and Commendation were awarded to a range of people, celebrating years of service to life-saving work, including actions at a serious crash on the A28 and at a mud rescue incident in Queenborough on the Isle of Sheppey.

Among the recipients was Ryan Smith, a teenager from Gillingham, Medway, who went into a burning building and warned the occupants to evacuate.

Long service and good conduct medals were also presented to 13 firefighters from around the county.

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# Putting our youth back on track

Tackling the complications faced by many of our youngsters continues to challenge the experts. In a special article for KoS, the chief executive of a Kent-based organisation believes it may hold the key

By Simon Dean

www.challengertroop.org

**D**O YOU know, there are kids in Kent who have never been in the woods? It's a fact that still shocks me, even after years of working with some of the area's most deprived and children and teenagers.

When we've taken groups out on exercises in the countryside, I've seen a boy climb over a stile into a field and try to pick up a cowpat because he had no idea what it was.

Challenger Troop CIC, an organisation working in partnership with schools across Kent, Essex and south east London offers alternative approaches to learning. Based in Tunbridge Wells we have been growing steadily since it was founded in 2007.

And we have a reason to celebrate this month as we will be presenting at the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester.

The idea behind the organisation is simple: To support pupils for whom day-to-day school life has gone wrong, for whatever reason, and to show them a way back into the classroom.

On the face of it, Challenger Troop, with its military ethos and programme of activities such as bushcraft and sur-

vival skills, looks a bit like boot camp. But that is to miss the point.

Our west Kent team leader, Neil Andrew, made the point to me that "the difference is that these guys want to be here. In uniform, the kids can drop all the front and just get on with it; drilling is the same, they learn they have to keep their shoes and clothes clean and to fit in, because if they don't keep the rules, there are consequences. A lot of these kids are not particularly good at classroom learning, but they have a lot of intelligence".

He admits he was much the same, so he understands. Here, they can do good physical stuff and also learn skills like team-building and leadership. It's not a soft option, and they can gain useful BTEC qualifications.

We are proud of our many success stories, once such case is 17-year-old Nathan Knight, from Tonbridge, who told me that a visit from a Challenger Troop team proved a life-saver.

He explained to me: "I was always getting involved in fights and swearing at teachers, hanging out with the wrong crowd and doing things I shouldn't. But when I heard what kind of things CT did, I thought it sounded really good.

"I didn't enjoy it at first, but after a while I realised I wasn't the big 'I am'



**TOUGH:** Challenger Troop admits its courses are no picnic but that the feedback from the youngsters taking part proves they gain a great deal from it and that it is making a difference to their lives and behaviour

and that I needed to change. It never felt like a punishment, but I'd tried to discipline myself and it hadn't worked, so I knew I needed a shove. They gave me that, but I really enjoyed myself too." This story is typical of the many testimonials that we have from students, teachers and parents.

There are very few organisations

like us, which work with pupils aged 6 to 18 within the school curriculum as well as outside of it.

I just feel kids today are being short-changed. Everyone wants them to have the best start in life, but many are not being given the basic skills they need, many kids are being over-nurtured. We offer them the time of their

lives, a golden opportunity to change.

A key revelation to me is that in a 21st-century world of computer games and quick fixes, was the discovery that the most popular outdoor game of all with youngsters of all ages, boys and girls, is always hide-and-seek. Doesn't that tell you something about what they really need?



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# Seeking your pop memorabilia

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

**A** PRODUCTION company behind a BBC project to compile a huge database of memories of pop music through the generations, is appealing for contributions from fans across the county.

The People's History of Pop will air on BBC4 in four hour-long shows starting next spring.

It is appealing for anything from photographs of friends attending pop concerts, ticket stubs, vinyl and even old festival wristbands for a project which will stretch from the modern day back to the 1950s.

Explains a spokeswoman for 7 Wonder, the production company compiling the data: "We're taking a unique approach to the research and are crowdsourcing people's memories and memorabilia from across the UK, covering all music and youth cultures from the 1950s to the noughties.

"It's a national project and so we are putting the word out all over the UK to get regional and local contributions. There have already been hundreds of uploads from across the UK.

"We'd love to hear from readers of their memories of the music scene in the area, whether that be gigs, clubs, venues, or growing up as a punk, mod or rocker in Kent."

Kent plays a key part in the history of some of the very biggest

names in the music industry.

Mick Jagger and Keith Richards re-kindled their friendship on Dartford train station – which would eventually lead them to joining the Rolling Stones – a band second only to the Beatles in terms of their global impact and one of the most in-demand live acts still performing today.

David Bowie lived in Maidstone and Bromley before hitting the big time – and legend has it his parents met at the cinema in Tunbridge Wells. While some of the biggest acts performed around the county – among them the likes of Jimi Hendrix, the Beatles, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd – many before they hit the big time.

Other acts who performed in the county – often at tiny venues – include the likes of Radiohead, The Cure and Joy Division.

In more recent times, the county has hosted performances by the likes of Madonna, Prince, Bob Dylan, Blur and Elton John.

The firm putting the shows together are working in conjunction with online sharing platform History Pin – a place where those contributing can upload pictures and recordings.

Images uploaded already include shots of people during the punk era, meeting their pop idols, and mixtapes they compiled as teenagers. There's even one of a party where those attending dressed up as the Spice Girls.

To upload your memorabilia, visit [www.phop.co.uk](http://www.phop.co.uk).



**COLLECTION:** Got some rare vinyl - then the BBC show wants to hear from you.

## ...AND SHARE YOUR LIVE EXPERIENCES IN KENT WITH US

DID you go and see the Beatles rock Margate or Chatham? Or perhaps you remember Jimi Hendrix performing in Folkestone?

Or maybe you saw Led Zeppelin in Canterbury – or Radiohead at the University of Kent?

If you were at one of these famous shows, then why not share

them with us? We'd love to hear about your first hand experience of seeing these legendary names at the start of their careers, or rocking in their prime.

Let us know what the experience was like, why you were there, and did you have any reason to believe they would go on to become the

multi-million selling success story they would become?

Write to us by sending your memories to: The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP. Or, alternatively, email us at [editorial@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:editorial@kosmedia.co.uk).

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**PANTOMIME:** The show will be opening in Dartford on December 12

## Shane Richie is preparing to take on his 'fun' panto role

**Molly Kersey** talks to the EastEnders actor about his upcoming performance..

**A**CTOR Shane Richie is looking forward to starring in this year's pantomime in Dartford.

The star, who is well-known for his role as Alfie Moon in BBC soap EastEnders, will be playing the lead role in Dick Whittington.

He recently took part in the pantomime launch at the Guildhall in London, where he viewed the Dick Whittington statue outside the Guildhall Art Gallery and met the Mayor of Dartford, Ian Armitt.

The pantomime will be opening at the theatre on December 12.

Speaking about the performance, Mr Richie told KoS: "I play Dick Whittington.

"The backbone of the story is this guy goes out on a journey and he gets married at the end.

"It's going to be very different to

any pantomime you have ever seen before. I try and make it so that no two pantos are ever the same."

The pantomime has a twist – it will involve screens and will be using 3D effects.

"I instruct the audiences to put on their glasses and interact with the 3D. It's incredible," explained Mr Richie.

And he said that he plans on getting the audience involved in the performance too.

"There is a lot of audience participation in my pantos. You don't want to be in the front row," he joked.

So what does he love most about panto, and why is it so popular year after year?

"It gives me a fun outlet, it's a way to let off some steam and pent-up energy that I have got when I am doing dramas.

"I love just going out and having fun with an audience. It's me having a laugh day after day.

"There's very few family shows, that a whole family can enjoy, from your 90-year-old nan to your five-year-old daughter."

Mr Richie is looking forward to performing in Dartford, and he has been to the area many times before.

"My wife visits Bluewater and Lakeside, so she knows Dartford very well, and it's only 20 to 25 minutes away from where I live," he said.

"We have been to the theatre so many times, I did a stand up there and did Boogie Nights.

"It's a lovely theatre."

Dick Whittington is produced by Qdos Entertainment.

Michael Harrison, managing director of Qdos Entertainment's pantomime division, said: "Shane is an

outstanding comedy actor and we're absolutely delighted to have his immense talent at The Orchard Theatre this Christmas.

"Wherever Shane appears in pantomime tickets always sell quickly, so early booking is strongly advised."

Orchard theatre director Chris Glover added: "Our panto is now one of the biggest and most popular in the south east with 95 per cent attendance for each of the last two years.

"We are excited that Shane Richie will be joining us this year and are confident that it will become another record-breaking production for Dartford."

For more information, or to book tickets to the show, you can visit [www.orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://www.orchardtheatre.co.uk).

Alternatively call the ticket office on 01322 220000.

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# Whitstable and Canterbury are backdrop to new crime strory

by Molly Kersey  
molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

**A** LAUNCH event will be taking place following the release of the second book in a Whitstable-based crime series.

Murder-on-Sea, written by author Julie Wassmer, was published on Thursday (October 1).

It is the second book in the series, and follows on from The Whitstable Pearl Mystery, which was released in March.

The book centres on private detective Pearl Nolan, who owns a restaurant called the Whitstable Pearl.

It features a number of familiar landmarks from both Whitstable and Canterbury.

Ms Wassmer explained: "The first book, The Whitstable Pearl Mystery, was set in high summer during the annual oyster festival but, by contrast, Murder-on-Sea takes place in the countdown to Christmas when the cold northerly wind blow in off the Whitstable shores.

"A well-known local character is poisoned at a charity event while a



**WRITER:** Ms Wassmer (right) signed copies of her books at Waterstones, Canterbury.

series of poison pen Christmas cards circulate around town.

"It's up to Pearl to find the killer but in this she's helped by city police detective, Mike McGuire, a DFL – down from Londoner – who has moved into an apartment in Canterbury's Best Lane.

"Apart from being a seasonal whodunit, involving no fewer than thirteen suspects, we get to follow the progress of Pearl and McGuire's

'will they, won't they' affair."

There will be a public launch event at the Old Neptune pub in Whitstable, which is featured on the book's cover, on October 14 from 7.30pm.

Television drama writer, Ms Wassmer worked for some 20 years writing EastEnders and other TV series before penning an autobiography in 2010 about how she become reunited with her

daughter after an extraordinary twist of fate.

The book, More Than Just Coincidence, published by Harper Collins, entered the Sunday Times bestselling top 20 and became Mumsnet book of the year in 2011.

Murder-on-sea is published by Constable and it is available to buy from Amazon – both in hardcover and as an eBook.

Both are priced at £19.99.

## The sound of Elvis Presley

ELVIS Presley tribute artist Lee Memphis King will be performing at the Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, on October 16 at 7.30pm.

For tickets, visit [www.atgtickets.com/folkestone](http://www.atgtickets.com/folkestone).



## Three Degrees performing

AMERICAN vocal group The Three Degrees will be performing at the Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone, next year.

The firm favourites of Prince Charles will take to the stage on April 9 at 7.30pm.

For more details, visit [www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk](http://www.parkwoodtheatres.co.uk).

## Holby City star on stage

HOLBY City actor Robert Powell will star in King Charles III at the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury, from October 27 to 31.

For more details, visit [www.marlowetheatre.com](http://www.marlowetheatre.com).



## Show will tell 100 stories

FAMILY show Sea Story will be performed at the Folkestone Quarterhouse on October 24.

The show weaves together 100 stories that have been written by young people and it is presented by dance theatre company Tall Tales Big Moves.

For details, visit [www.quarterhouse.co.uk](http://www.quarterhouse.co.uk).

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# Cooking lesson with MasterChef's John Torode

**Keeley Bolger** takes a cookery masterclass with MasterChef's John Torode as he releases a new book

**“WHAT** are you like in the kitchen?” asks MasterChef's John Torode at the beginning of our cookery masterclass.

“I'm OK,” I grunt, a mental carousel of burnt biscuits, teeth-extracting pork joints and soggy bottoms whirling to mind.

“Did anyone tell you that you had to be brilliant at cooking?” despairs the 50-year-old, with a world-weary sigh. “People forget that their friends love them. They come around to your house for dinner not because they want you to show off to them. They come round your house for dinner because they love you.”

My nearest and dearest might be more inclined to come round for dinner if there was less chance of the usual tortured pasta dishes I foist upon them. And evidently, I'm not the only one to feel coy about my cooking skills (or lack of) because Torode's new cookery tome *My Kind Of Food* explores just that.

A deeply 'personal' collection of recipes (complete with pictures and cards made by his four children proudly placed alongside the acknowledgements), the emphasis is on getting us back in the kitchen and having some fun there.

And if that means using shop-bought condiments, so be it.

After starting off with banana bread, we move swiftly on to pesto



**MASTERCLASS:** John Torode and Keeley Bolger.

and tomato tarts and pesto and pods, made with peas.

While the tarts are in the oven, the surfaces are wiped down (the Aussie chef is very much a mucker-inner) and the dad-style puns flow. Torode receives an unexpected delivery of flowers to celebrate the launch of his book.

“I know who those are from... my lovely girl,” he smiles. A check of the card and a quick phone call confirms they are indeed from Torode's “lovely” girlfriend Lisa Faulkner.

The two met back in 2010 when actress and now cook Faulkner won *Celebrity MasterChef*. After a few years of friendship, they fell in love.

Very much personally unified, the couple like to keep things separate professionally.

“I think the prospect of Lisa and me doing a cookery show together is very slim,” says the keen cyclist. “We'd be very happy, but the fact is we're very different cooks. We have our own lives and that's what is good about it.”

Recently, Torode had to come to terms with his oldest son flying the nest to Sydney. That all his blood leave home knowing how to “iron a shirt, buy a bus ticket and cook a couple of bits” is something Torode holds dear.

“Good food should be accessible to everybody and that's what I've done with the book,” he says.

“I'm not after Michelin stars, I'm not after praise, what I really like is when people taste my food and say, ‘That's delicious’. If that word comes out all the time, that's fantastic.”

## Sequel to a hit musical

**MUSICAL** Dreamboats and Miniskirts will be performed at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, from Monday (October 5) to October 10.

The sequel to *Dreamboats and Petticoats* tells the story of what happens to Bobby, Laura, Norman and Sue.

Performances will be taking place at both 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

To book, visit [www.atgtickets.com/bromley](http://www.atgtickets.com/bromley)

## Dancing the last tango

**STARRING** Strictly Come Dancing stars Vincent Simone and Flavia Cacace, *The Last Tango* will be performed at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford.

The pair have danced together for some 20 years, and will be saying goodbye to the stage in their final show.

The *Last Tango* runs from October 26 to October 31.

For tickets, visit [www.orchardtheatre.co.uk](http://www.orchardtheatre.co.uk)

## The Kooks to perform

**BAND** The Kooks will be performing in Folkestone in December.

The band formed in 2004 and their songs include *Naive*, *She Moves in Her Own Way*, *Around Town* and *Seaside*.

The Kooks will be performing at the Leas Cliff Hall on December 14 at 7pm.

Tickets start at £26.15.

For more information, or to book, visit [www.atgtickets.com/folkestone](http://www.atgtickets.com/folkestone)

## Blues show on stage

**BLUES-ROCK** band Virgil and the Accelerators will be performing at the Beaverwood Club, Chislehurst.

The band will be taking to the stage on November 26.

They have released two albums – *The Radium* and *Army of Three*

Advance tickets are £10 or £12 on the door.

To book tickets to the show, you can call 0208 761 9078.

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## Peppa Pig is live on stage

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## Story of Beauty and Beast

PANTOMIME Beauty and the Beast will be performed at the Central Theatre, Chatham, from December 10 to January 3, 2016. Tickets for the preview night are £12 and start at £15 for other performances. To book tickets, you can visit [www.tickets.medway.gov.uk](http://www.tickets.medway.gov.uk).

## Hamlet is live streamed

SHAKESPEARE'S Hamlet, starring Benedict Cumberbatch, will be broadcast live via satellite to Bluewater Shopping Centre's cinema. The screening takes place on October 15 and 22 at 7pm.



## Al Murray takes to stage

COMEDIAN Al Murray will be bringing his show The Pub Landlord: One Man One Guvnor, to the Margate Winter Gardens on November 7. The performance will be starting at 7.30pm and it is suitable for those aged 16 and over. Tickets are £20.50. To book, visit [www.margatewintergardens.co.uk](http://www.margatewintergardens.co.uk).

# Artists unveil work in four north Kent towns

By Molly Kersey  
[molly.kersey@archant.co.uk](mailto:molly.kersey@archant.co.uk)

FOUR artists will create new work in four areas of north Kent as part of project Out of Ordinary Places. Ruth Ewan, Lucy Joyce, Mikhail Karikis and Richard Hougueuz will be creating work in Iwade, Sittingbourne, Strood and the Isle of Grain.

They have been commissioned by arts organisation Ideas Trust, with the aim of encouraging local people to get involved with art.

Ms Joyce will hold a number of performances and workshops in Sittingbourne from October 10.

They will involve local residents decorating the town, creating large scale billboards and theatrical building backdrops, with the notion of what a blue sky is being explored.

She said: "Visiting Sittingbourne, I felt an extreme sense of community values, engagement and the desire to progress as a place. As an artist, my interest is not to bulldoze through the town, make an artwork and leave, but to bring contemporary art to a community at its source, build



ARTIST: Lucy Joyce will be in Sittingbourne

relationships and start a conversation that can continue throughout and beyond the project."

Her piece, Blue Skies, will culminate in a film of the same title. A public screening will take place on November 25 from 5pm to 7pm at Sittingbourne's New Century Cinema.

Ruth Ewan will reveal her work No Tail in Strood on December 22.

Created through workshops, people living in Strood are invited to devise a pantomime to be performed at a 13th century

manor house – Temple Manor.

"We've begun a course of conversations with local people, research at Medway archives, gathering local folklore, traditions and myths," she said.

Mikhail Karikis will create a commission on the Isle of Grain that will be unveiled on December 11 and Richard Hougueuz will present a short film of experiences and observations, Wend Iwade, at a date to be confirmed.

To find out more, visit [www.ootoplace.co.uk](http://www.ootoplace.co.uk).



ARTIST: Ruth Ewan will be in Strood. Credit: Felicity Crawshaw.



INSPIRE: Mikhail Karikis will unveil work on the Isle of Grain.



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# Protecting animals of South Africa

## TRAVEL REVIEW

by Sarah Marshall

**C**LAMBERING over each other to get a better view, my fellow passengers are stunned into silence by the sight of two stocky, muscular white rhinos.

It's a fairly typical reaction for first-time safari-goers, but what makes our game drive significantly different is the fact these wide-eyed spectators live just a few kilometres from the park, yet have only ever encountered wildlife on TV and in story books.

I've joined a group of 11-year-old pupils from Grahamstown Primary School for a Bush Day in the Amakhala Game Reserve on South Africa's Eastern Cape, as part of a six-week Coaching for Conservation educational programme.

Guides from the park's 11 lodges and camps, such as Bukela, where I'm staying, have volunteered to help out as drivers for the day, and I've come along to find out how wildlife, tourism and community empowerment are so heavily interdependent.

Originally set up by anthropologist Lesley McNutt as a Botswana-based project in 2004, C4C aims to teach children about endangered species and their environment through interactive games and sport. By translating animal skills to the football pitch, children begin to have a better understanding and appreciation for the world around them.

So far, the project has been a huge success, counting Prince William and Prince Harry as supporters, and there are now plans to implement it in other regions of Africa.

In 2013, C4C was invited to join with Investec's Rhino Lifeline project in South Africa, tweaking the curriculum to focus on the highly endangered African rhino.



**TEACHING:** C4C is helping children learn about endangered species and their environment.

The country's poaching crisis is now so grave, game reserves such as Amakhala refuse to disclose the exact number of rhinos on their grounds, and rangers are banned from even mentioning the animal on radio intercoms.

As we bump across the reserve's muddy terrain, excited children grip tightly to their seats, frequently losing their orange C4C baseball caps in the wind. Several warthogs scurry

into the bushes, their tails held erect like radio antennae, causing roars of laughter all round. When coach and game ranger Melumzi stops the vehicle to pick up a dry ball of elephant dung, smiles quickly turn into wrinkled grimaces.

"Some people burn this to ward off evil spirits," he reveals, pulling apart the fibrous poop. "I even used to wash in the stuff!"

His startling admission is met with

looks of amusement and horror.

Along with providing entertainment, Melumzi also has some important lessons to share. He tells the children, who are now listening intently, that on average, three black rhinos are poached in South Africa every day; then goes on to say their prized horns are made of nothing more than calcium and keratin - just like our fingernails.

While the children gaze at two of

## TRAVEL FACTS

Sarah Marshall was a guest of The Ultimate Travel Company (02030518098) a supporter of Tusk projects Africa-wide. A tailor-made seven-night self-drive and safari trip costs from £2,640, including four nights at Cape Town's Clarendon Fresnaye hotel, three nights at Bukela Lodge in the Amakhala Conservancy, car rental and flights from London Heathrow.

Amakhala's white rhinos, Melumzi explains how the animal can quickly divert its course, a skill that can be employed both on the football pitch and in everyday life.

"If your friends do something you think is wrong, then it's important to change direction and turn away."

Back at the camp base, which consists of a simple classroom and sports area, the message is further consolidated through games and lessons guided by project co-ordinators Jenny Gush and Kate Muir.

Some children perform a haka-style dance with sticks representing rhino horns, while chanting C4C's core values: respect yourself; respect each other; respect your environment.

Afterwards, the children take part in a series of football skills exercises: first Kate times them dribbling a ball around cones, then they have to pass the ball back and forth for as long as they can until someone loses control. Over the course of six weeks, their times will be recorded and improvements measured.

Since Lesley and John started C4C, more than 9,000 children have benefited from the programme in both Botswana and South Africa, through courses or day visits to schools.

## Film Reviews by Damon Smith



**MACBETH**  
(15, 113 mins) Drama/Thriller/  
Action/Romance

MACBETH, played by Michael Fassbender, and Lady Macbeth, played by Marion Cotillard, are inconsolable after the loss of their beloved son. On the battlefields, the Thane encounters a trio of

witches and a child, who foretell his rise through the ranks and eventual coronation at the expense of King Duncan.

Aided by his wife, Macbeth murders the monarch and frames his manservants.

The king's son Malcolm flees and Banquo - who is party to the witches' proclamation - naturally suspects Macbeth's trembling hand in the foul play. Macbeth subsequently turns his attention to rival Macduff and in one of the film's most harrowing scenes, he orders the execution of Lady Macduff and her children so that no one stands in his way.

**THE INTERN**  
(12A, 121 mins) Comedy/Drama/  
Romance

BEN Whittaker, played by Robert De Niro, is struggling to get to grips with the gentle ebb and flow of life

following the death of his wife. To keep his mind active, Ben applies for a senior citizen internship at a flourishing Brooklyn-based company founded by workaholic, Jules Ostin (Anne Hathaway).

As Ben settles into his new role, he befriends Jules' overworked personal assistant Becky, her husband Matt and their precocious daughter Paige. He also makes a big impression on in-house masseuse Fiona, sowing the seeds of a tender romance.

When Jules' position as CEO comes under threat, Ben provides emotional support and teaches his boss that success shouldn't always come at the expense of personal relationships.

**THE MARTIAN**  
(12A, 141 mins) Sci-Fi/Thriller/  
Action

THE film opens with the six-strong



crew of the Ares 3, led by Commander Melissa Lewis, gathering samples. Sensors pick up an approaching storm and Lewis gives the order to evacuate. During the trek back to the ship, botanist Mark Watney, played by Matt Damon, is hit by flying debris.

"I know you don't want to hear this. Mark's dead," crew member Beck informs Lewis, who reluc-

tantly blasts off with the rest of her team. They begin the long journey back to mission control, crestfallen by their loss.

Little do they realise that back on Mars, Watney is alive.

"I gotta figure out how to grow three years' worth of food on a planet where nothing grows," Mark mumbles, recording a video diary of his exploits.



**O**CTOBER is the month for apple festivals, when National Trust gardens, nurseries, farms and orchards invite the public to taste and buy hundreds of different home-grown varieties, and get tips from top growers on how to reap the best harvests.

We grow more apples both commercially and in the garden than any other fruit tree. Apple Day, started by charity group Common Ground, celebrates its 25th anniversary this year on October 21, so there's no better time to start growing your own.

Most apples sold today are grown on dwarfing rootstocks prefixed with the letter M - for Malling, the Kent research station where they were developed from the 1970s.

Dwarfing rootstocks, like M26, keep the tree small, under 3.6m (12ft) tall and slow-growing. They also crop early on in life, within a year or two of planting. However, dwarfing rootstock, which produces slightly smaller trees, needs extremely fertile soil, regular watering and yields are lower. So if you have room, you may want to choose a slightly larger tree.

Trees grown on dwarfing rootstocks need to be supported by a strong stake, as their roots are not massively strong. You'll need to keep a 90cm (3ft) circle around them of bare soil which is free of weeds and other plants. With more vigorous trees, that area needs to be kept free for three to four years while the tree becomes established, after which



**APPLES:** October is the perfect time to start trying to grow your own

## Get to core of apple success

time you can grow grass around it.

Apple blossom needs to cross-pollinate with one or two other varieties to set fruit, but usually there will be enough apple trees in the area to ensure a crop. If there aren't other apple trees in the vicinity, you may have to grow another variety which flowers at the same time. Alternatively, grow a self-fertile variety such as 'James

Grieve' or 'Cox's Self-fertile'.

You can also buy family trees, where two to four different but compatible varieties are grafted on to one tree, ensuring cross-pollination and a longer cropping period.

Container-grown trees can be planted all year round, but bare-rooted trees should be planted while they are dormant, between November and

March. Free-standing trees, grown in the open without any horizontal support, are by far the easiest to maintain. Prepare the site at least a month before planting, double digging to aerate the soil and create a 1m (3ft) square plot where each planting is to take place. The most common mistake is to dig a hole too deep and too narrow to house the roots properly.

Dig a hole large enough for the roots to spread easily and knock in a stake at least 30cm below the bottom of the planting hole on the side from which the prevailing wind blows.

Make the most of the apple festivals in October, to give you ideas for the best choice to grow. For details of apple festivals and events, visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/events)

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

## Despair over the future of Ukip

AS ONE involved with the original creation of Ukip, acting as national membership secretary for the first five years, the MEP candidate in Kent east in 1994 and one who stood against Edward Heath for the parliamentary seat of Old Bexley, I feel something approaching despair at the events on Thanet District Council (KoS, last week).

While the issue of Manston Airport is important, Ukip was created to oppose the handover of our democratic right to govern ourselves to the single European state centred in Brussels, and anyone elected on that platform deserting the party risks undermining the cause of British independence at this vital time when the referendum is looming next year.

Those involved should reflect that, were the pro EU forces to succeed in winning the referendum, decisions on anything of importance, including the location of airports, will pass irrevocably to the unelected bureaucrats of Brussels.

**Colin Bullen,**  
Tonbridge

## Thanet remains in poor health

TWENTY years ago the then East Kent Health Authority (EKHA) decided three main hospitals in east Kent was unsustainable. A five-year battle ensued between the Canterbury and Margate hospitals as to which one would become the other 24-hour A&E hospital (the William Harvey (WHH) at Ashford being 'home and dry').

At the meeting held to decide the fate of the other two, it was a unanimous decision that Margate would get the nod, recognising the need, the population number and the pockets of deprivation in Thanet.

EKHA became EKHUFT (East Kent Hospitals University Foundation Trust) which seemed a good idea at the time but turned out to be bad news for Thanet because gradually, piece by piece, surreptitiously over the last 20 years EKHUFT has taken departments and staff from Margate hospital (which became the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital (QEOM) - with its newly built A&E wing) placing them mostly at the WHH in Ashford, but with cardio-vascular at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

We now do not have, in Thanet,

## LETTER OF THE WEEK



## Corbyn could be key to Labour in county

JEREMY Corbyn's shadow cabinet being more representative with its 52 per cent women will be good news to many people in Kent (KoS, 20.09).

Others will be relieved that David Cameron is now forced to think more carefully about his rush to bomb Syria. And many will be pleased there should at last be a proper debate about whether to spend £100 billion on a nuclear weapon that no sane person would ever use rather than on, say, improving the NHS, education or care of the elderly.

Mr Corbyn has already changed the political agenda. We will have to see what policies come out of the re-vitalised Labour Party before judging how tempting they will be to the Kent electorate.

However, Corbyn's own beliefs in a fairer society with less inequality will chime with many residents, especially in Kent's many seaside towns and less advantaged urban areas. His championing of the NHS

and public services will be attractive to many; and if his proposed public ownership of the railways can cut fares Kent's commuters will be delighted.

His ideas for tackling the housing shortage - allowing local authorities to build, controlling spiralling rents and his 'asset-building' scheme whereby private renters build up capital - should be popular across the south east. Whilst his support for small businesses and readiness to stand up to the rampant global corporations increasingly trying to control our lives will be welcomed by many. So, plenty of potential areas of interest for Kent residents. Whether this translates into votes will depend, in part, on whether people get a chance to listen to what he actually says rather than being distracted by the determined attempts by much of the national media to misrepresent him and his views.

**Richard Stainton**  
Whitstable

## Now in its fifth glorious month...

SO THE ever tetchy Phil Granger now speaks of being free and equal (KoS, letters, last week) but still cannot bring himself to unequivocally back gay marriage for one?

Seems some are more equal than others as the saying goes.

Previously, John Humphrey asked what if God exists? To which I simply say which one and who's version of such?

If it's his Christian one, then

**Betty Renz,**  
via email

since that entity is supposed to 'move in mysterious ways'; then I suggest he consider that maybe I am being 'moved' to tell him to stop using an old book to repress his true feelings so accepting himself and others as they are.

Finally, as for Ian Taylor, his suggestion that car emissions are improving was blown out of the water by the VW vehicle emission scandal; one which may extend to other manufacturers as well.

Further, his call for more roads and growth, again typically for someone who has long denied climate change along with his group; goes against the very real need now to tackle such along with species extinction, overpopulation, poverty and conflict resolution, as set out by the UN's new program for global sustainable development goals, which I fully support

**Ray Duff,**  
Folkestone

## Problems in the classroom

FURTHER to my article on why so many teachers are leaving the profession and the consequences (KoS, 20.9), the following extreme example, from a Gravesham primary school may underline the concerns.

This primary academy with 22 teachers is employing six newly qualified teachers (NQTs), two of whom were engaged over the summer holidays, together with three NQT-plus-one years, one of whom was removed from classes last year because of problems with teaching standards in the first year.

Of the three teachers with two years' qualified teaching experience, one is the English co-ordinator the other has seen extremely rapid promotion to assistant headteacher, whose responsibilities include being assessment manager and phase leader for Years 5 and 6.

Three years' experience is sufficient to qualify another teacher to become an NQT mentor, promoted from English co-ordinator.

Another new teacher appointed over the summer holidays has experience. The second assistant headteacher is on long term sick leave. There are also two instructors. The academy also provides cover with student teachers teaching lessons for absent staff.

Two NQTs left in July 2015, because of lack of support, with around seven other teachers leaving recently for similar reasons.

**Peter J Read,**  
Gravesend  
([www.kentadvice.co.uk](http://www.kentadvice.co.uk))

## KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

**We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.**





**Peacock butterfly in Lydd**  
by **Joan Guyll, Lydd**

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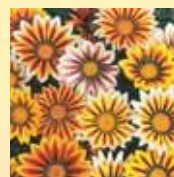
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By Steve Loader  
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**STAR:** The new Astra is now the star of the family hatchback sector



## Astra now the family hatch star

**FIRST DRIVE:** Vauxhall family hatch can now rightfully claim to be the family favourite to beat, with a winning combination of virtues...

**V**AUXHALL'S latest Astra five-door has defined the family hatchback sector. The outgoing car came close, but despite looking better than its key rivals, the Ford Focus and VW Golf, it never quite matched them dynamically. However, that it came so close to being No1 means no great surprise now that the new model goes top as it arrives in showrooms, priced from £15,295 - undercutting the old car by up to £2,200.

All that was good has been carried over and enhanced, but shedding 200 kilos has been key - more than the weight of two average UK males. This was achieved through lighter yet stronger materials and forensically examining where small savings could be made - the exhaust system, brakes and wheels are all lighter, for instance.

And the effect is electrifying: while slightly smaller outside than before - though bigger inside - the new Astra is supermini nimble, yet comfortable as an executive saloon, even when pushing an impressively flat and composed cornering stance to the limit.

Credit also goes to tuning the British-built car's chassis on our roads, a baptism guaranteeing it will perform on extreme surfaces elsewhere in Europe.

The British-led design team at Vauxhall/Opel



excelled itself with a more compact and aerodynamic design - drag co-efficient Cd 0.285 versus old model's 0.325 - that looks slick, with the rear pillar black panel suggesting a raked roof that belies excellent rear headroom to match generous legroom.

The dashboard is neat and well-organised with a user-friendly touchscreen.

The ground-breaking, potentially lifesaving,

OnStar system is also offered: a high-speed 4G mobile network, emergency response notification and stolen vehicle recovery alert - it works.

The lightweight powertrains complement the car too, especially the all-new 1.4-litre turbo petrol, and I look forward to testing the three-pot 1.0-litre turbo, which has impressed in the new Corsa.



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Personal contract hire offer on Viva SE 1.0i 75PS in Solar Red, subject to availability and status. Age 18+ only. Figures based on a non-maintenance contract hire package with advance rental of £690, then 35 monthly rentals of £115. Excess miles over contracted mileage of 15,000 over 36 months charged at 7.24ppm. Personal contract hire offer on ADAM SLAM 1.2i 70PS in Greenspotting metallic paint with White My Fire roof colour pack, subject to availability and status. Age 18+ only. Figures based on a non-maintenance contract hire package with advance rental of £195. Excess miles over contracted mileage of 15,000 over 36 months charged at 7.31ppm. Personal contract hire offer on New Corsa Excite 1.4 90ps ecoflex a/c in Sovereign Silver, subject to availability and status. Age 18+ only. Figures based on a non-maintenance contract hire package with advance rental of £620, then 35 monthly rentals of £124. Excess miles over contracted mileage of 15,000 over 36 months charged at 6.64ppm. Excess charges also apply if you breach manufacturer servicing or maintenance guidelines or if the car exceeds BVRLA Fair Wear & Tear guidelines for its age/mileage when it is returned to Vauxhall Leasing. Package includes Road Fund Licence and Vauxhall Assistance. Guarantee/indemnity may be required. Prices and details are subject to change without notice. For full specification and Ts&Cs contact your local Retailer. **You will not own the car.** ALD Automotive Ltd., trading as Vauxhall Leasing, BS16 3JA. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Offers available on orders or registrations between 2 July and 7 October 2015. #MPG figures are official test data and may not reflect real driving results. Offer applies to pre model year 2016 vehicles only. See Retailer for further details. Correct at time of going to press.

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# Hyundai baby makes a buzz... again!

Hyundai's original i10 grabbed the city car sector by the scruff of the neck. Incredibly, it's done it again, writes **Steve Loader...**

**M**Y head buzzed for a week while driving the latest Hyundai i10. Not because it was a bag of old nails, but because I kept telling myself how impressive it was against its predecessor.

After all, the original i10 (2008-13) pretty much nailed the city car format at the first attempt, if we discount Hyundai's quite awful Atoz, axed from the UK in 2001.

OK, the Mark 1 i10 looked slightly bizarre, being styled to fit four people, give them an entry door each, and not much else to impress the eye.

However, even if the occupants looked to be wearing the i10 rather than riding in it, this little car was outstanding in so many ways.

It was cheap to buy, fuel and insure and there was even a low emission road tax exempt version later on.

It also drove surprisingly well with lively engines, responsive handling and town car verve plus decent motorway refinement. Considering its short wheelbase, the ride wasn't bad either.

Typically generous specifications and Hyundai's comprehensive



five-year/unlimited mileage warranty also helped, as did the then Government's grant aided Scrappage scheme.

Suddenly, Hyundai's market share shot up: the Korean brand had become a major player and was able to overhaul its dealer network and make even greater gains.

The Mark 2 i10 - launched last year and priced from £8,895 - has all its predecessor's virtues, plus even greater refinement and far more style.

The old i10 sold on good sense, not street cred, but Hyundai's consumer research had shown would-be city car buyers - many downsizing from



something sleeker - now want more style, as well as functionality and that is a tall order at this end of the car market, so the new i10 is lower and sleeker.

It also has a more premium cabin feel: there's even more space thanks to a longer wheelbase, though the car is also slightly bigger on the

## Hyundai i10 1.2 SE

Price:	from £10,475
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Skoda Citigo

outside too; the seats are better; all fixtures and materials are higher quality; and the 252-litre boot plus 1,046-litre 'seats down' load capacities are the biggest in class.

You also get proper wind-up windows in the back - electric too, on anything but the entry-level 'S' model - when many rivals have turned the clock back to the 1960s and installed pop-out rear glass.

But it's out on the road that the i10 impresses most of all, with brisk three-cylinder 1.0-litre and four-cylinder 1.2-litre petrol engines and exceptional refinement and ride quality for the sector, plus good handling.

The test car was the best-selling 87bhp 1.2 SE, looking good value at £10,475 for such a big-hearted little car.

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Fuel consumption figures for new Fiat 500 range in mpg (l/100km): Urban 51.4 (5.5) – 65.7 (4.3); Extra Urban 65.7 (4.3) – 83.1 (3.4); Combined 60.1 (4.7) – 74.3 (3.8). CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 110 – 88 g/km. Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

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**LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES**

**LICENSING ACT 2003**

Julie HAMER of 9 The Broadway, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2AD has applied to Thanet District Council, P.O. Box 9, Cecil Street, Margate, Kent for the Grant of a Premises Licence under the Licensing Act 2003. A copy of the application may be inspected during normal office hours at the Thanet District Council offices, address above.

The licensable activities will be: Supply of Alcohol 10:00 to 22:00 hrs Sunday to Thursday, and 10:00 to 23:00 hrs Friday and Saturday.

Any representations in respect of the application should be made in writing to the Licensing Department, Thanet District Council, P.O. Box 9 Cecil Street, Margate, Kent by the 27th October 2015.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is £5000.

**ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2014/15**  
**NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION OF**  
**COMPLETION OF AUDIT**

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that under Regulation 11 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 the District Auditor has completed the audit of the above accounts for the year ended 31 March 2015.

An unqualified opinion and the audit certificate on the accounts were issued by the External Auditor on the 30th September 2015. On the same date, the External Auditor issued an unqualified conclusion on the Authority's arrangements for securing value for money as required by the Audit Commission's Code of Practice. The Auditor has not identified any issues of public interest to report under Section 8 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.

In accordance with Section 14 of the 1998 Act, any local government elector for the area may:

- Inspect and make copies of the Statement of Accounts.
- Ask the Authority for a copy of the Statement of Accounts.

The Statement of Accounts is available for inspection by any local government elector for the area at Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL, on weekdays (excluding public holidays) between 9.00am and 5.00pm. The accounts can also be found at: <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/budgeting-accounts>

**Goods Vehicle**  
**Operator's Licence**

K D Demolition Limited of Sand & Gravel Ltd, Quarry Drive, A20 Swanley Bypass, Hockenden Lane, Swanley BR8 7QH is applying to change an existing licence as follows

To keep an extra 3 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at the operating centre at Quarry Drive, A20 Bypass, Swanley BR8 7QH

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be effected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to making representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.



# Sustainability the key for Tonbridge

Steve Churcher discusses the Angels' unique ownership policy

## Football

By Tom Pyman

Tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

**T**HE chairman of Tonbridge Angels says the club is "proud" of its unique ownership structure.

Anyone can pay £25 a year to buy a share in the club and have a say on the way it is run.

Steve Churcher told KoS: "We have a 'one member, one vote' policy. Anyone can become an owner and it doesn't matter how much you put in.

"A few clubs have done this in the past as a last resort. For us this is a matter of choice and something we're proud of. You don't have to be a wealthy guy to be a director of a football club.

"Any fan of any club will feel as though they own it anyway, all we are doing is giving them the opportunity to actually do that."

The idea has been adopted by clubs in the past, not least by Kent rivals Ebbsfleet United, but Mr Churcher is confident the Angels' approach will have a longer lasting effect than it did at Stonebridge Road.

"When Ebbsfleet tried to implement a similar idea, they had to ask everyone if they could buy a pencil," he said.

"It's not like that here, the fans will elect a board of directors who will make the key decisions.

"We didn't start selling shares until July this year and we have 211 members, so we're pleased with that in just three months and it's continuing to grow every week.

"The main thing is to keep people involved and it will be interesting to see how many renewals we get next



**LONGMEAD:** Tonbridge Angels' current home ground and chairman Steve Churcher (inset)

Pictures: STEVE POSTON

year, and whether the novelty will wear off."

Maidstone United released figures this week that showed the club is operating at a profit, albeit with the help of a televised cup run and investment from wealthy owners.

The Tonbridge chairman doesn't believe the structure limits the club in its ambition but gives sustainability.

Mr Churcher said: "Non-league is

littered with clubs that have multi-millionaires who come in and then walk away, leaving the club to then plunge into the abyss.

"We want sustainability and this structure gives us that. We've been in existence since 1947, if a multi-millionaire was going to come in and make us into the new Manchester United, they would have done so already. We want to be secure for the next 10 years."

## Young Tunbridge Wells gymnasts strike gold

### Gymnastics

TWO Tunbridge Wells schoolboys from the town's Next Dimension Gymnastic Academy (NDGA) have won gold at the European Championships in Acrobatic Gymnastics, held in Germany.

Sam Large, 14, who attends Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, and Hector Kinghorn, 11, of Skinners Kent Academy, took the top spot on the podium representing Great Britain in the Men's Pairs in the 11-16 years age group in Riesa.

The reigning British champions have already tasted success in Europe this year having won gold medals at both the MAIA Cup in Portugal and the FIAC event in Belgium.

Coach Chris Rogers, a European



**CHAMPIONS:** Sam Large and Hector Kinghorn in action

Champion himself and a former member of Spelbound, winners of Britain's Got Talent in 2010, accom-

panied the boys in Germany having been appointed to the GB coaching team.

Louise Clark, chief operating officer at Markerstudy Leisure, which owns and operates NDGA, said: "We are all incredibly proud of Sam and Hector and it is hugely motivating for pupils, staff, parents and everybody involved at the academy.

"The boys' success shows what our young people can achieve through hard work, dedication and the commitment of their families."

The European Championships took place over three days, with qualifying on Friday and Saturday (September 25 and 26) and the finals on the Sunday.

The sport comprises two elements, balance and tempo, with each routine lasting two minutes.

## Sport Shorts

» Email [sports@kosmedia.co.uk](mailto:sports@kosmedia.co.uk) or call Jamie Weir on 01233 653481

## Northeast 'honoured' to take Kent captaincy

**CRICKET:** SAM Northeast has been appointed Kent County Cricket Club captain for 2016.

The 25-year-old Ashford-born batsman was the unanimous choice to succeed Rob Key after leading the side on the pitch for the majority of the 2015 season.

The Spitfire Batsman of the Year prospered in the role, hitting 2,007 runs in all formats this summer after stepping up from vice-captain.

The former England Under-19 right-hander said: "It's a great honour to become club captain of a team I've supported from a young age and follow in the footsteps of some great captains.

"Hopefully the future is bright for Kent and I can help bring some silverware back to the club."

Chairman of cricket Graham Johnson said: "Sam has been seen as a potential leader as he has developed through the Kent Cricket system.

"The next stage of Kent Cricket development at the highest level is in good hands."



**NORTHEAST:** The new Kent captain scored over 2,000 runs

## FA reject Gills appeal over McCammon case

**FOOTBALL:** THE Football Association has rejected an appeal by both Gillingham FC and club chairman Paul Scally against an Independent Regulatory Commission's findings in relation to the Mark McCammon race victimisation case.

The club and Mr Scally were each fined £75,000 after the charge was found proven following a hearing in July 2015.

This was challenged by the two parties to an appeal board on September 15, 2015.

The original decision was upheld in addition to the fine for Mr Scally, while the fine for the club was reduced to £50,000.

The case began in November 2010 after McCammon, a former Gills player, believed he had been treated unfairly by then-manager Andy Hessenthaler and assistant boss Nicky Southall and accused them of being racist.

An employment tribunal in



**ROW:** Gillingham and Paul Scally's appeal was rejected

July 2013 ruled that the player had been the subject of race victimisation by dismissal and damages were awarded.

## Shakey seeks Silverstone success

**SUPERBIKES:** KENT'S Shane 'Shakey' Byrne returns to British Superbike Championship action this weekend at Silverstone and the defending champion has his sights set on a return to the top of the podium.

The Sittingbourne-based rider currently lies second in the overall standings but with five races remaining of the 2015 title

battle Shakey is confident of a resurgent performance at the penultimate round of the season this weekend.

He said: "We had a test before Silverstone so we can arrive at the next round in a better shape because nothing short of five wins is enough. I am doing everything I can and so are the team to make it happen."

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13 13	NISSAN JUKE 1.6 16v Visia 5dr, 8,336 miles	£8,700	15 15	VAUXHALL MOKKA 1.4 T Turbo 16v, 11,302 miles	£16,400
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**ME15 9YF**



**MG3 Fuel consumption mpg (l/100km) for MG3 Range: Urban: 37.7 (7.5), Extra Urban 57.6 (4.9), Combined 48.7 (5.8), CO2 Emissions 136 g/km.**

Car shown for illustration purposes only. F.G. Barnes & Sons Limited is a credit broker and not a lender. Finance subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. Available to 18s and over. Guarantee / indemnity may be required. Finance by Santander Consumer Finance RHI 1SR. **You will not own the vehicle until all repayments are made.** Please ask for further details.